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BRIEF VIEW  
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**Scriptural Authority**  
AND  
HISTORICAL EVIDENCE  
OF  
**INFANT BAPTISM;**

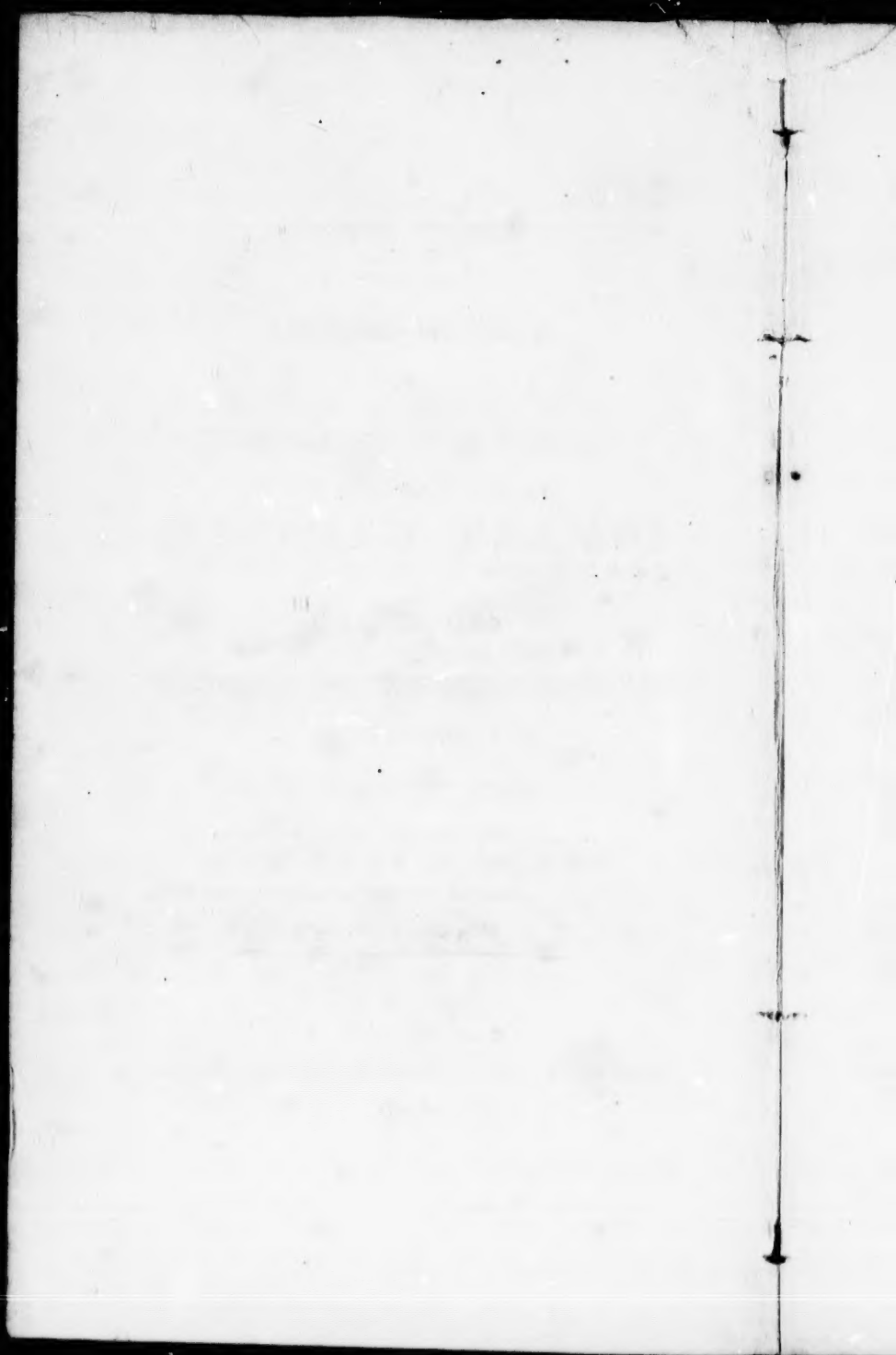
AND A REPLY  
TO OBJECTIONS URGED IN THE TREATISE OF  
**E. A. CRAWLEY, A. M.**

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**BY J. W. D. GRAY, A. M.**  
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ST. JOHN, N. B.

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TO THE  
RIGHT REVEREND AND HONORABLE  
JOHN INGLIS, D. D.  
*LORD BISHOP OF NOVASCOTIA,*  
THE FOLLOWING WORK  
IS  
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED  
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THE AUTHOR.



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## CONTENTS.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE WHOLE BIBLE THE CHRISTIAN'S RULE OF FAITH. 1.

### CHAPTER II.

ON THE MINISTRY AND BAPTISM OF JOHN, 6.

His Ministry exercised under the Jewish dispensation, 6. His baptism essentially distinct from Christian baptism, 9.

### CHAPTER III.

ON THE EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM, AND OTHER ALLUSIONS TO THIS RITE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, 18.

The baptism of our Lord, 19. Baptisms at Pentecost, 20. Of the Samaritans, 21. Of the Eunuch, 23. Of Paul and the Ephesian disciples, 23. Allusions to this rite, 24. Baptism of Cornelius and the Corinthians, 25.

### CHAPTER IV.

THE SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY FOR INFANT BAPTISM, 28.

The Apostolic commission, 28. Passages from the Old Testament which reflect light upon the interpretation of it, 29. Passages from the New Testament which reflect light upon it, 37.

### CHAPTER V.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE IN FAVOUR OF INFANT BAPTISM, 52

Justin Martyr, 53. Irenæus, 57. Tertullian, 59. Origen, 63. Cyprian, 66. Augustine, 69. Pelagius, 75. Syrian churches, 78.

## CHAPTER VI.

ON THE OBJECTIONS ADVANCED IN REGARD TO THE TERMS OF THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION; TO THE LANGUAGE OF JESUS IN REFERENCE TO CHILDREN, Mark x. 13—15,—AND ST. PETER'S DECLARATION, Acts ii. 38. 79.

Objections in regard to the Apostolic commission, 79. Objections in regard to our Lord's words in reference to children, 88. Objections in regard to St. Peter's declaration, 93.

## CHAPTER VII.

ON THE OBJECTIONS ADVANCED AGAINST THE CONNEXION OF THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CHURCH; THE ABRAHAMIC AND CHRISTIAN COVENANT; AND THE RITES OF CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM, 99.

- § 1. Does the sameness of the Jewish and Christian church, if granted, establish infant baptism? Bearing of the argument upon Circumcision, 103. Female infants, 104. Servants and dependants, 105. Import of circumcision, 107. An initiatory ordinance, 112.
- § 2. Does the argument for the sameness of the Christian and Jewish church rest upon a fallacy? 116. Nature of the Christian church, 118. Nature of the Jewish church, 119.
- § 3. Are there any valid arguments against the sameness of the Jewish and Christian church? From the nature of the Abrahamic covenant; 123. From the description of the Christian covenant in the viii. of Hebrews, 128.
- § 4. Objections to the particular arguments for the sameness of the Jewish and Christian church considered, 130—138.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE OBJECTIONS TO THE ARGUMENTS DRAWN FROM THE BAPTISM OF HOUSEHOLDS, AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE APOSTLE IN REGARD TO CHILDREN, 1 Cor. vii. 14. 139.

- § 1. Objections to the argument drawn from the baptism of households, 139. Argument misrepresented, 139. Not weakened by the language employed in regard to those families, 141. Lydia's family, 144. Family of Stephanas, 148.

- § 2. The language of the Apostle in regard to children, 1 Cor. vii. 14. Various interpretations of it by Baptist writers, 149. True meaning of the passage, 155. Meaning of terms "unclean," and "holy," 156.

## CHAPTER IX.

## ON THE OBJECTIONS MADE TO THE ARGUMENT DRAWN FROM ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, 160.

Value of this testimony, 161. Objections to the testimony of Tertullian, 167. Of Origen, 172. Of Augustine and Pelagius, 176. Of Cyprian, 178. Supposed counter-testimony of Gregory Nazianzen, 180. Of Basil, 185. Councils of Mela and Lerida, 183. Charlemagne, 189, and Hosius, 190. Catechumens, 191. Infant communion, 192. Neander, 197. Curcellæus, 198. Salmasius, and Suicerus, 198. Rigaltius, 199. Baxter, 200. Luther and Burnet, 200.

## CHAPTER X.

## ON THE MODE OF BAPTISM, 202.

Meaning of the term *baptize*, 203. In classical authors and the Greek fathers, 203. In the Septuagint and the Apocrypha, 206. In the New Testament, 213—238. Professor Stuart's opinion of Romans vi. 3—5, 223. Dr. Wall's opinion of it, 227. Pædobaptist's, testimony, Dr. Campbell, Dr. Wall and others, 238. Mr. Gale's, 240. Testimony of history respecting immersion, 240. Summary of the arguments, 250.

## CHAPTER XI.

## ON THE DESIGN OF BAPTISM, 253.

Threefold definition of this ordinance, 254. Erroneous views of it, 262. Evils falsely ascribed to infant baptism, 263. Summary of evidences, 275.

## CHAPTER XII.

## ON THE VISIBLE CHURCH, 280.

Mr. Crawley's view of its nature, 280. Scriptural view of it, 282. Texts supposed to sanction separation, 290. Hooker's authority, 291. Case of the reformers, 297. Appeal to members of the Church of England, 304.

✍ A few typographical errors require the indulgence of the reader: but as they do not appear materially to affect the sense, it has not been thought necessary to insert a list of Errata.

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## PREFACE.

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THE writer of the following remarks desires to commit them to the Press, in the spirit of Prayer, regarding it as a duty to offer them, however imperfect, in defence of the cause of Truth. It is not without having considered the responsibility attached to the undertaking, or having perceived his own disqualification for it, that he has ventured to discuss a question of so much moment. Religious controversy, he is fully aware, cannot be neutral in its effects. Good or evil must result from it. By many pious minds it is dreaded, as the fruitful source of unchristian feelings. These, however, are not necessarily connected with it. It may be pursued in the spirit of the Gospel, under the sanction of Heaven, and advance the glory of God.

The controversy in regard to Infant Baptism, is, by no means, a matter of indifference. Nor is it a point upon which we cannot arrive at satisfactory conclusions. The evidences which support it may be less direct than those afforded us upon many other subjects, but they are evidences sufficiently plain to discover the path of duty, and to render us responsible for pursuing, or neglecting that path.

The subject has been ably handled by men of learning and talents at different periods, and it may seem superfluous to add to the numerous publications which already exist in regard to it. But in point of fact it is not superfluous. Every person at all acquainted with History must know, that opinions, which have been examined and rejected by the Church in past days, are continually re-appearing in a costume adapted to modern taste, and supported by such additional argu-

ments as modern ingenuity, and modern criticism can furnish. To meet these efforts, the publications of other days and countries are not appropriate. The weapons employed by our ancestors, though formed with skill and highly tempered, do not, in their present shape, answer the purposes of modern warfare: they must be adapted to the science of the day, and the peculiar mode of contending, which our opponents are pleased to adopt.

The object of the remarks contained in the following pages is to present in a compendious form the scriptural grounds of Infant Baptism, and the historical evidence which so powerfully supports this primitive custom. In connexion with this attempt, it is necessary to discuss the several objections which have been advanced against it, all of which have been collected and urged, with force, in a pamphlet published some time ago, by Mr. Crawley of Halifax. Had that work been simply an answer to the pious and sensible publication of Mr. Elder, it would not have called for a reply from a Minister of the Established Church. But as it turns aside from this object to make repeated attacks upon the Church of England, as well as other Protestant Establishments, and invites the members of it to separate from her communion, as a duty they owe to their conscience, their God, and the cause of truth, it would be an act of criminal indifference to the interests of that Church, to suffer it to pass unnoticed.

Impressed with this conviction, and urged to give it its due weight, by many friends, for whose opinion the Author entertains the highest respect, he has consented to place himself, where none who feel the responsibility attending the ordinary duties of a Minister of Christ would be willing to be placed, without an imperious call of duty,—in the arena of controversy. In doing this, it has been his prayer to the Father of lights, that he might be guided into truth, and so impressed with the sacredness of the cause he was engaged in, as to be kept from employing any argument which he did not conscientiously believe to be valid, or using any expression which was inconsistent with Christian principles. To avoid every expression which some may think severe or exceptionable, he could not possibly expect; had he been possessed of Paul's meekness and inspiration, instead of being one of the least subdued and sanctified of God's servants, he could not have anticipated such a result. Readers in general interpret expressions by their own peculiar views and feelings, and it often happens, that what is uttered in kindness is received in hostility. But this he does not hesitate to declare, as in the

sight of Him who searches the heart, that his aim has been, not in any instance to wound the feelings, but by calm and candid argument to convince the judgment of those who differ from him.

In the arrangement of the work, he has found it necessary to pursue a different plan from that adopted in the Pamphlet he has replied to. Much contained in that publication, is matter of personal discussion with Mr. Elder, and irrelevant to the simple question at issue between the advocates and opponents of Infant Baptism. With these matters, of course, the Author had no concern. He has also been desirous of presenting the Scriptural Evidences in favour of Infant Baptism, in a simple and disencumbered form. This method, he believes, is most likely to serve the cause of truth, and to furnish those who are not accustomed to critical discussions, with a concise and candid view of the question.

It was necessary, in the first instance, to notice Mr. Crawley's views as to the proper standard of reference in this discussion; to consider whether the New Testament alone, or the whole Bible ought to be that standard; and to examine, with some degree of care, his views of the Ministry and Baptism of John, as well as of the other examples of Baptism recorded in the New Testament. To these objects three chapters are devoted. The two ensuing ones present the Scriptural and Historical evidences in favour of Infant Baptism. The several objections to the arguments drawn from these sources, are then considered in distinct chapters. The three concluding ones are devoted to a consideration of the mode and design of Baptism, and the nature of the Visible Church.

In conclusion, the writer desires to add, that in the whole investigation, he is not sensible of having neglected the consideration of a single argument, which has been urged in the Pamphlet before him, against the practice of Infant Baptism. He has endeavoured, whether successfully or not remains to be proved, to understand the precise meaning of his opponent, and to meet his positions with plainness and candour. In quoting from ancient writers, especially the Christian Fathers, he has taken pains to consult, and carefully examine the original works, and can venture, he believes, to vouch for the accuracy of his quotations. In the whole discussion, he has acted under the full persuasion that he was advocating the cause of truth; and however feebly it may have been done, this conviction animates him to trust, that God will render what he has said, subservient to His own honour, the good of His people, the peace and prosperity of His church. Should this effort be employed by Him, who "worketh all in all," to preserve one soul from error, or



strengthen one heart in its adherence to truth, or to aid, even in the slightest degree, the cause of that Saviour whom he reveres, and the Church which he loves, he shall rejoice sincerely in having made it, and bless God who has permitted him to do so.

ST. JOHN, SEPT. 10th, 1836.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### THE WHOLE BIBLE THE CHRISTIAN'S RULE OF FAITH.

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IN our inquiries after truth, it is certainly of primary importance to ascertain whither we ought to look, as the true and legitimate source of information. To expect to arrive at just conclusions, without having decided this preliminary question, would be in the highest degree unreasonable, and, in general, an effectual barrier against our success. In the discussion relating to Infant Baptism, this point is of serious moment, and we regret that in the adjustment of the question, we should feel ourselves compelled to differ so widely from our Baptist opponents. It is impossible, however, that we should ever regard their sentiments in this instance, as just or Scriptural, unless they consent to take the Bible, and not a limited portion of it, as the standard of reference.

Their view, as lately expressed upon the subject, is, that it would "be easy to settle the controversy if men

would agree to let the New Testament decide.”\* From this opinion we dissent. We are convinced, that no agreement to make the New Testament the exclusive standard of reference would conduce to the settlement of the controversy, unless men were also agreed about the right interpretation of the New Testament, and, in that case, we think they would find sufficient there to teach them the propriety of this practice.

The question is asked, “Who that never heard of the custom of baptizing infants, and should confine his inquiries to the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, would ever think of introducing such a practice?”\* May we not ask in reply, How came the primitive Christians to refer to the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles as their authority for this practice? It is certain that the early Christian Fathers do so,† and, what is not a little remarkable, our opponent tells us that “it was doubtless the erroneous interpretation of such texts as John, iii. 5. Ephes. v. 25. Tit. iii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 21, which first prepared the way for Infant Baptism.”‡ This assertion we do not subscribe to, for we know that the primitive Christians had Apostolic practice, as well as precept, to guide them in this matter; but we cannot fail to perceive that between the question and the admission of our opponent there is an obvious contradiction. The latter certainly amounts to a confession that there is something in the language of the New Testament, which, in point of fact, led the Christians of ancient times to maintain this practice.

But why, in this instance, should we limit our views to the New Testament? Is it a sufficient reason, to say that “Baptism is not a Jewish but a Christian rite?”\* If we admitted this, which however we do not, could this circum-

\*Mr. Crawley's Pamphlet, p. 5. †See especially *Tertullian*.

‡Mr. Crawley's Pamphlet, pp. 19, 20.

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stance render it improper to go to any other source but the New Testament for information in regard to it? Does the Jewish dispensation, as revealed in the Old Testament, reflect no light upon Christian rites? Does the ordinance of the Jewish Passover afford no information, in reference to the Lord's Supper? Do the laws for the observance of the Jewish Sabbath render us no instruction as to the Christian Sabbath? Surely a just view of Divine Revelation must show the propriety of consulting, upon a point of this kind, the Old Testament as well as the New. The whole of Revelation comes from God. One Spirit animates it all. The different parts of it are closely connected, and mutually reflect light upon each other. Shall we not then avail ourselves of this light, in order to see more distinctly the truths which it contains? We are convinced that the New Testament itself directs us to pursue this mode. St. Paul tells us that "all Scripture was given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for instruction."\* Elsewhere he says, that "the things which were written aforetime, were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.†" And when he lays down a rule for the just interpretation of these things, he recommends us to "compare spiritual things with spiritual."‡ Indeed without adhering to this rule we should have the most indistinct, and, in many instances, false impressions about the meaning of the New Testament. Who, for example, could rightly understand the Epistle to the Hebrews, without going back to the Old Testament for information upon a variety of points? And, what just idea could we obtain as to the nature and design of positive institutions at all under the present economy, if we were left to form our judgment in regard to them, without any aid derived from their use and employment under the prior dispensation?

\*2 Tim. iii. 16.

†1 Cor. x. 11.

‡1 Cor. ii. 13.

It cannot however be necessary to pursue this subject further, for Baptists themselves practically confess the truth of our sentiments upon this subject, by adopting precisely the mode of reasoning that we do, whenever it suits their purpose. When, for example, they wish to find a sanction for the observance of the Sabbath, they point to the Old Testament, to its institutions prior to the Law,\* and the inscription of a command concerning it upon tables of stone at Mount Sinai. Now why should we go to the Old Testament for information about the Christian Sabbath, if we are not permitted to do so for information about Christian Baptism? All efforts to vindicate the former upon Baptist principles must fail. The author of the pamphlet before us attempts to do it by drawing a distinction between moral principles and outward ceremonies.† He speaks of the Sabbath as if it were in itself a moral principle, while Baptism is a mere ceremony. Let him reflect, however, that both are in themselves positive institutions, and, as to the outward observance of them, ceremonial; but as to the principles upon which they rest, both are moral and permanent. When God created mankind, it was right that they should worship Him. It was consistent with the relation that subsists between the Creator and His creatures. It is equally proper therefore under every dispensation, that one day in seven should be devoted to that object. So when he formed a Visible Church, it was right that its members should be formally admitted to it, and consecrated to Him. It was consistent with the relation that subsists between God and the members of His church. This therefore, like the former, rests upon a permanent principle. It is equally proper under every dispensation.

We are clearly justified then, by the verdict of reason, the testimony of Scripture, and the example of our op-

\*Mr. Crawley's Pamphlet, p. 86.

†Ibid. p. 6.

ponents themselves, in going beyond the limits of the New Testament for information upon this serious question. We shall therefore, in the following observations, assume, as the basis of our argument, the evidence contained in the New Testament, but at the same time, shall make our appeal to the Old Testament, as well as the history of the Christian Church, for corroborative proof of our sentiments.—First, however, it will be necessary to remove some mistaken ideas in regard to the ministry of John.

## CHAPTER II.

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### ON THE MINISTRY AND BAPTISM OF JOHN.

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Baptists maintain that John's Ministry and Baptism were the same as the Ministry and Baptism instituted by Christ, and that John baptized no infants. The first assertion is directly contrary to the plainest evidence of Scripture ; and the second cannot be proved. We therefore reject, as utterly without foundation, the inference they draw from these premises against the practice of Infant Baptism. To shew that we are warranted in doing so, we shall examine the nature of John's Ministry and Baptism.

I. Our opponents say, that "in his ministry and Baptism, John was a servant in Christ's Kingdom, and no Minister of the Jewish Dispensation.\*" Let us see what are the grounds upon which they rest this conclusion.

First, they tell us, that "his ministry was connected with the beginning of the Gospel, and must therefore have been a Christian, not a Jewish ordinance."† But is it possible upon calm reflection, to admit this inference ? The

\*Mr. C's pamphlet, page 22.

†Ibid. p. 21.

question to be decided is, Was John's Ministry, in itself, the beginning of the Gospel, so as to form a part of it? Was the Legal dispensation superseded, and the Gospel dispensation introduced in its place, when John exercised his Ministry? The first verse of St. Mark's Gospel certainly does not prove that this was the case. It is merely a remark prefixed, as a kind of title, to the following narrative, but was never intended to apply peculiarly to what is said of John. The Chapter gives an account of the manner in which the Gospel was introduced. This is what the title of it declares, and not that John's ministry was exercised under the new dispensation.

But we are also referred to Luke xvi. 16, and the parallel passage Matt. xi. 12, 13, as containing proofs that John was a Christian Minister.\* The meaning of these passages seems to be this.—“The Jewish Law and Prophets by their types and predictions, foretold the coming of the Messiah, as a distant event, but John declared his kingdom to be immediately at hand; and from the moment this joyful announcement was made, men have evinced the most ardent desire to receive its doctrines and share its privileges.”† This view of the passage strictly accords with every thing that is said, both in the context and other parts of Scripture, as to the ministry of John; but it by no means proves that John was a Minister under the Christian Dispensation. Indeed we have the very strongest evidence, that he ought not to be viewed in this light.

Every description of this extraordinary man, whether given by Prophet, Apostle, Angel, or Christ himself, represents him as the *Forerunner* of Jesus; as a Messenger who was to *precede* him;‡ as a Prophet sent to announce his coming *beforehand*.§

\*Mr. C's pamphlet, page 21.

† “Homines summo desiderio flagrant, ut recipiantur in sectatorum Christi cœtum.” Schleusner in loc.

‡Mal. iii. 1.

§Luke i. 76. Acts xix. 4.



The design of his Mission was evidently not to declare the doctrines of the Gospel of Jesus, but to *prepare the way for his reception*, by calling upon men to repent and be ready to believe in him who was speedily to be revealed to them.\*

There was nothing in his appearance, manner, or ministrations, that accorded with the character of a Christian Minister. All was stern, severe, alarming.—It was the voice of Sinai, not of Sion; the message of the Law, not of the Gospel; the spirit of Elijah, not of Paul.†

The actual message he delivered was, in terms as express as language could make it, opposed to the idea that the reign of Christ had as yet begun. He never announced that this was the case, but on the contrary, that the kingdom of God was *nigh*, or *at hand*.‡ Our opponents say,—This “must imply its actual commencement;”§ but we differ from them. The terms themselves do not fairly admit of this construction, and one plain fact shews they were never intended to do so. We find that this phrase “the kingdom of God is nigh,” was “first used by the Baptist, then by our Lord himself, and lastly by his disciples in his life time, but is never repeated after the resurrection,” when the Covenant of Grace had superseded that of the Law.

Not however to multiply proofs beyond what are necessary, it may suffice to add, that our Lord’s own description of John, in Matthew xi, ought to be amply sufficient of itself, to convince us that John’s ministry was exercised under the existing Jewish Dispensation. He admits the superiority of John to all the Prophets, inasmuch as he had the honour of announcing the immediate arrival of the Messiah, but at the same time tells us that “he that was least in the kingdom of

\*Isaiah. lx. 3, 4, 5. †Mal. iv. 5. & Matt. xi. 14. Matt. iii. 4.  
‡Matt. iii. 2. §Mr. C’s pamphlet, page 21.

heaven was greater than he.”\* The obvious meaning of the passage is, that however great John might seem when compared with his predecessors in prophecy, “the least evangelical prophet or preacher of the Christian doctrine, whose office it would be to preach Christ crucified, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension, and the blessings of Redemption, would thus be employed in a more distinguished service, and more abundantly endued with the Holy Spirit, than John had been.”† To avoid the natural inference from this passage, our opponents have put a widely different construction upon it. They tell us that the expression “he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he,” means that “John was to be more esteemed for his piety than for his great name as a prophet.”‡ We marvel at this interpretation. It is indeed, to use the mildest terms that can be applied to it, a serious perversion of Scripture. No mind, that was not strongly biassed, could for a moment admit it. The very necessity for adopting such an extravagant view of this passage furnishes additional evidence, that John can never be properly ranged among the ministers of the Gospel Dispensation.

II. We shall now examine, what stands in close connexion with this topic,—the *nature of his Baptism*.

It is a great mistake to say, that “the ordinance of Baptism first appears in connexion with the ministry of John the Baptist,”§ unless the author of this remark means, merely, that the account of his Baptism comes first upon the pages of the New Testament. The application of water to the body, as an emblem of inward purification, was extensively practised under the Jewish economy, and with the express sanction of God.|| The

\*Matt. xi. 11. †Valpy in loco. ‡Mr. C’s pamphlet, p. 22. §Mr. C’s pamphlet, p. 7. ||Lev. viii. 5, 6. & xiv. 7, 8. Heb. ix. 10

Jews were perfectly familiar with the use of it for this important end, before John the Baptist was even the subject of prophecy. This, however, is a point of minor consequence. Our concern at present is to compare his baptism with that of Jesus, that we may trace the resemblance and the difference between them.

As to the baptism administered by the disciples of Jesus, before his death, we have not sufficient evidence to decide whether it bore a close affinity to that of John or not. The mere assertion made by some of the Pharisees, that "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,"\* cannot determine it. It might be said of the Episcopal Church in India, that it makes and baptizes more disciples than the Baptist Church in that region, without proving that the baptism of the one was the same as the baptism of the other. It would still be true that the one was confined to adults, whereas the other extends both to adults and infants.

Nor if it could be shewn, that these baptisms were in every respect the same, could it determine anything with regard to the admission or exclusion of infants. Our opponents assume, but without any sufficient ground for it, that infants were excluded from the baptism of John. They argue that such must have been the case, because in the account of his baptism "there is no mention of them," and because those who received it, are said to have done so, "confessing their sins."† We cannot admit that this is conclusive reasoning. In the succinct account of John's baptism, it was not to be expected that any express mention would be made of infants, especially as every Jew was familiar with the custom of admitting them to God's covenant, by the rite of circumcision, and in the case of the children of proselytes, by baptism

\*John iv. 1.

†Mr. C's pamphlet, page 8.

also.\* And as to the declaration, "they were all baptized of him, confessing their sins," it is obviously a general remark, intended merely to shew what they did, who were grown to maturity; without meaning to say that none were admitted to his baptism, who were incapable of such confession. If Swartz, Buchanan, or Martin, or the present Bishop of India, had stated, in a brief account of the Eastern Church, that multitudes had come forward to baptism, in some particular district, "confessing their sins," should we conclude that none of their infants were admitted to this privilege? If it were said "they were all baptized, confessing their sins," should we think ourselves warranted in taking the term "all" in its strict and absolute sense? The Scripture certainly often employs it in a very different way. For an example, we need not go beyond the very passage under review. "All the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem, went out, and were all baptized, &c." Does the expression "all the land," mean literally every man, woman, and child? If so, infants were unquestionably baptized. If not, let us confess that the mere use of the term "all," as applied to those who confessed, is no sufficient proof that infants were not baptized. Against the idea of their exclusion, we might, with much more reason, urge the general practice of the Jewish Church, both in reference to circumcision, and baptizing the infants of proselytes. Dr. Lightfoot, who was well acquainted with the writings and customs of the Jews, remarks upon this point, "I do not believe the people that flocked to John's baptism were so forgetful of the manner and custom of the nation, as not to bring their little children along with them to be baptized."† And Ambrose, the earliest Christian writer that touches upon the subject, seems to have entertained no doubt of their

\*See note upon Proselyte Bap. ch. vi. †Hor. Hebr. on Matt. iii.

having done so.\* The assumption therefore, that John baptized no infants, is entirely without foundation. The Scripture does not say so, nor any ancient writer. The practice of the Jewish Church, both in reference to circumcision and baptism, is against the supposition, and so is the opinion of antiquity. What then becomes of the inference which our opponents draw from it, in regard to the baptism of Jesus?

Let it however be distinctly understood, that the advocates of Infant Baptism attach no importance to this matter. They say to their opponents,—prove, ever so clearly, that infants were excluded from the baptism of John, and it will not shew that they ought to be withheld from the baptism of Christ; for between the baptism of Jesus, as instituted after his resurrection, and that of John, there is a broad distinction, which must render it impossible to reason with fairness from the one to the other, upon this point. This distinction might be traced in several particulars; but, waving the discussion of minor points, we may notice two which ought to be decisive of the question.

1. A leading design of the baptism instituted by our Lord is, *the admission of those who receive it into the visible communion of His Church*. It is an initiatory rite, by which the subjects of it are grafted into His body, and visibly sealed as members.† But the baptism of John has no design of this nature. It was, as the very name by which it is distinguished implies, a mere sign of repentance.‡ It was no seal of the covenant of Grace; no means of admission to it; no pledge to assure us of its blessings. Now this distinction appears to us to be all-important in this question. What if it could be shewn

\*Wall's Hist. Part i. chap. xiii. †1 Cor. xii. 13. John iii. 5.

‡Acts xix. 4.

that infants were not admitted to a baptism, instituted for the limited object of awakening, for a few months, the attention of the Jews to the importance of reforming their lives! Would this prove that they ought to be excluded from one, intended to be the very door of admission into the Christian Church? We are persuaded that it never could. Upon this ground, therefore, if no other existed, we should reject the inference, that infants ought not to be admitted to Christian baptism, because they had not been included in John's.

2. But the baptism of Jesus is distinguished from that of John, by another most important mark of difference; that of John was only the "baptism of water," that of Jesus was also the *Baptism of the Holy Ghost*. This distinction is repeatedly and emphatically marked in Scripture. God the Father announced it to John.\* John declared it to his followers.† Jesus, just before his ascension, brought it to the recollection of his disciples;‡ and when in after times his Apostles witnessed the verification of his words, they recalled to mind the promise of their heavenly Master,—“John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.”§ Now this distinction, so frequently inculcated, opens to us a further reason why John's baptism can be no rule to govern us in the application of Christ's. Though an infant cannot repent, an infant may receive the Spirit,|| nay, *must*, if he dies in infancy and goes to heaven, receive that very Spirit, of which water in baptism is the appointed emblem. And why should we refuse the emblematical part of the Saviour's baptism, to one who can receive the substantial part of it?

The importance of this distinction, as it bears upon the

\*John i. 33, 34.

†Matt. iii. 11.

‡Acts. i. 4, 5.

§Acts xi. 15, 16.

||Luke i. 15.

question before us, is very strikingly shewn by the account of the disciples at Ephesus in the 19th Chapter of Acts.\* It is as follows: "And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, *We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.* And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, *John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance,* saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they *were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*" From this passage, it is plain that John's baptism was essentially different from that of Jesus; that while the one was characterized as the baptism of repentance, the other was distinguished by its peculiar privilege, as the baptism of the Spirit; that while the one had no formula on record, the other was administered "in the name of the Lord Jesus;" that while the receivers of one might be ignorant of what concerned the Spirit, they who were admitted to the other both knew and received the Spirit; and that these distinctions were deemed so important by the Apostles, that they re-baptized the disciples of John, in the name of the Lord Jesus, in order to their admission to the peculiar privileges of his baptism.

This passage, one would think, ought to settle the point in regard to the baptism of John, and to convince an unbiassed mind; that his baptism was essentially different from that of Jesus. Our opponents themselves are somewhat staggered by it, and have evinced no little ingenuity

\*Verses 1-5.

to evade its force. They tell us that "critics have differed as to whether the persons mentioned in this passage were baptized by Paul, and that the question depends upon a nice construction of the Greek particles."\* We are perfectly ready to hear the arguments deduced from the Greek particles, whenever they are disposed to advance them; but in the mean time, shall try the question at the bar of common sense. The point is this, who are the persons that were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus?"† Are these the words of Luke, describing what happened to these Ephesian disciples, or are they a continuation of Paul's words, describing what occurred to John's disciples in Judea?—To the latter opinion these strong objections present themselves. First, it supposes John's disciples in Judea, to have been baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus" which is contrary to fact. Had this been done, men would not have "mused in their hearts whether John himself were the Christ or not;"‡ and it would have been useless for Jesus to enjoin his disciples not to divulge the fact of *his* being so, until after his resurrection.§ Secondly, it supposes these disciples at Ephesus to have received the Holy Ghost, without partaking of any other baptism than that of John, though the express distinction between his baptism and that of Jesus was, that this privilege exclusively belonged to the latter. Thirdly, it not only breaks the natural and obvious connexion between the 5th. and 6th. verses of this chapter, but supposes Paul's inquiry in the 3rd. verse, and his reply in the 4th. to be without point or object. For these reasons, we plainly see that the persons here represented as "baptized in the name of Jesus," were not John's disciples in Judea, re-

\*Mr. C's pamphlet, page 20. †Acts xix. 5. ‡Luko iii. 15.  
§Matt. xvi. 20, & xvii. 9.



ceiving baptism at his hands; but (as a man of common understanding would infer, upon first reading the passage) these disciples at Ephesus receiving it at the hands of Paul.\* John's baptism, therefore, could not have been Christian baptism; for this could never be twice administered to the same persons. It is in vain to say—"their great ignorance might justify it."† This would be a reason for instructing them, but not for baptizing them again. And equally vain is the conjecture, that they might not have been actually "baptized by John, but by some of his disciples."‡ They say, they were baptized with *John's baptism*. St. Paul takes them at their word, and then baptizes them again, in the name of Jesus; thus shewing, as plainly as words or actions can shew, that these two baptisms were not the same, that they were essentially different, and that all the inferences which our opponents draw from their supposed identity, are utterly without foundation. Our conclusions, then, are

1st, That the question, whether John baptized infants or not, remains undecided, and consequently all arguments, drawn from the supposition that he did not do so, are founded upon mere conjecture.

\*Professor Ripley makes the following remarks upon this passage: "I fully agree with Professor Stuart in the opinion expressed by him, that the fifth verse, viz. *when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*, is the language of Luke, relating what was done to the twelve men, after Paul's conversation with them. It never seemed to me right to represent this verse as the language of Paul, informing these men what was usually done in the days of John the Baptist. A reader, not thinking of the controversy respecting the verse, could hardly fail to understand it, as the language of Luke the historian, relating that after Paul had conversed with these men, 'they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus;' and that he then laid his hands on them, with which action was connected the imparting of the Holy Ghost."—*Christian Baptism*, page 144.

†Mr. Crawley's pamphlet, page 22.

‡Ibid. page 33.

2nd. That if this conjecture were right, it could prove nothing in regard to the baptism instituted by Christ, which stood distinguished from that of John in several particulars, which render it proper that infants should be admitted to it.

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## CHAPTER III.

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### ON THE EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM, AND OTHER ALLUSIONS TO THIS RITE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

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THE cases of baptism by John, as we have already seen, have nothing to do with Christian baptism. The proofs are numerous and convincing, which shew that his baptism was entirely different from that of Jesus. In addition to those given in the previous chapter, we might here refer to the case of Apollos, as affording further evidence to the same effect. For why should it be said of him, that "he taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing *only the baptism of John*,"\* if to know his baptism was to know the baptism of Jesus; in other words, if these baptisms were the same? It is quite unnecessary however to dwell further upon the point, and we should have thought it superfluous to allude to the subject again,

\*Acts xviii. 25.

were it not for the stress which is laid upon the manner in which our Lord was himself baptized, as if it were to be an example or model for the baptism of all the members of his Church.

The account of our Lord's baptism, as recorded by St. Matthew, is as follows:

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo! the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo! a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."\*

On this account we remark, first, that the baptism here recorded is one of those performed by John, and therefore, as already proved, entirely distinct from the baptism instituted by Jesus after his resurrection. Secondly, that the reason of our Lord's submitting to this baptism, is here given;—"it became him to fulfil all righteousness." John's baptism had the sanction of God. It was right, therefore, that Jesus should submit to it as an act of obedience. There was also a peculiar propriety in his receiving it at that particular period. The priests, under the Law, could not enter upon the discharge of their sacred functions, without having previously washed at the door of the Tabernacle. Jesus was now on the point of beginning his ministry. He therefore, though of a different order from that of Aaron, might have deemed it

\*Matt. iii. 13—17.

expedient to fulfil this type, that he might thereby magnify the Law, and make it honourable. Thirdly, we may observe, that the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus at this time, was no privilege consequent upon the reception of John's baptism, but, on the contrary, a sign to distinguish him, as the administrator of a totally different baptism.\* How absurd then is the attempt to hold Him up as an example of adult baptism to Christians! An example of one baptized "in his own name"! a "believer"! nay, in some sense, not literal, "a penitent believer"!† If it had been consistent for Jesus to receive his own baptism, how, we ask, could it have been administered to him in infancy, thirty years before its institution, and without a Christian living to administer it? John, as Baptists think, was the first Christian Minister;‡ but John was then in his cradle; who then was to perform the ceremony? As well might it be argued, that all the descendants of Abraham ought to have received circumcision at an adult age, because Abraham did so;‡ and indeed this might be urged with far greater propriety, for the circumcision which Abraham received was the same in its design and privileges with that of his descendants, but the baptism which Jesus received from John, was, as we have shewn, essentially different in these respects from that which he himself instituted at an after period.

There are ten examples of Christian baptism recorded in the New Testament; but as three of these relate to the baptism of households, which we shall afterwards consider among the proofs of infant baptism, we shall at present only advert to those which our opponents regard as counter evidences upon this question:

#### 1. The baptism of the converts at Pentecost.

\*John i. 33.

†Mr. C's pamphlet, page 27. ‡Ibid. p. 22:

§Gen. xvii. 24.

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7. †Ibid. p. 22:

Acts ii. 37. "Now when they heard *this*, they were  
"pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest  
"of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?  
"38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized  
"every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the  
"remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the  
"Holy Ghost. 41. Then they that gladly received his  
"word were baptized; and the same day there were add-  
"ed unto them about three thousand souls. 42. And they  
"continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fel-  
"lowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 47.  
"And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should  
"be saved."

This passage contains no proof against Infant Baptism.

We are told that the converts on this occasion repented  
and believed; but we are not told that any infants were  
presented and rejected because they could not repent and  
believe. Those who infer from its being said, "The  
Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved,"  
that the ministers of Jesus baptized none who could be  
lost, infer what is contrary to fact, as the case of Simon  
Magus clearly proves. This expression therefore affords  
not a shadow of evidence against Infant Baptism.

## 2. The Baptism of the Samaritans.

Acts viii. 5.—"Then Philip went down to the city of  
"Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6. And the  
"people wit record gave heed unto those things  
"which Philip hearing and seeing the miracles  
"which he did. here was great joy in the city.  
"12. But when they heard Philip preaching the things  
"concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus  
"Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13.  
"Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was  
"baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, be-

"holding the miracles and signs which were done. 18. "And when Simon saw, that through laying on of the "Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered "them money, 19. Saying, Give me also this power, that "on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy "Ghost. 20. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish "with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of "God may be purchased with money. 21. Thou hast "neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not "right in the sight of God. 22. Repent therefore of this "thy wickedness; and pray God, if perhaps the thought "of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23. For I perceive "that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond "of iniquity."

Upon this passage, we offer two remarks. First upon the expression "they were baptized, both men and women."—Our opponents ask, why is it said "men and women," and not men, women and *children*?\* We answer, Because about the rights of children no question could arise, but about that of the women there might. Women were not admitted to the initiatory ordinance of the Jewish Church, but children were. Hence the inspired writers take particular pains to shew that all such distinctions were done away in Christ.—See this more fully illustrated in Galatians iii. 28.—We further remark upon the case of Simon, that here was an instance, in the very infancy of the Gospel, of a man baptized upon a profession of faith, whose heart was not right with God. How absurd is it, with such an example before them, for men to argue that we must not baptize infants; the Gospel Church is too spiritual to admit them, for they may prove "themselves by their subsequent lives to be among the lost"†

\*Mr. C.'s Pamphlet: page 14.

†Ibid: page 13.

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id: page 13.

Observe also, that when Peter counsels this wicked man, he says to him, *Repent*, not, *Repent and be baptized again*. He does not think the ignorance of Simon, in regard to the Holy Ghost, a reason for re-baptizing him. This therefore could not have been the reason for re-baptizing the disciples at Ephesus, as our opponents fancy.\*

### 3. The Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch.

Acts viii. 35.—"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 36. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the Eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37. And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38. And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him."

The baptism of Paul is related in Acts ix.—and that of the disciples at Ephesus, which we have already quoted at length, in Acts xix. These three examples and especially the first of them, are held forth by our opponents as triumphant proofs, that instruction and cordial faith must precede the rite of baptism.† Triumphant proofs they are indeed, that these things must precede baptism *in the case of adults*; but in respect to infants, they prove *nothing*. Jesus required faith in the adults who came to be healed; shall we thence conclude that he would never have healed a child who could not exercise it? Jesus said, "He that believeth not shall be damned;"‡ and again, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;"§ do we thence infer

\*Mr. C's pamphlet, p. 22. †Ibid: p. 14. ‡Mark xvi. 16.  
§Luke xiii. 3.



that infants, who cannot believe or repent, are inevitably lost? We should deem such an inference a most unwarrantable perversion of Scripture, and yet it is precisely upon this principle that Baptists proceed, when they bring forward a formidable array of texts, all pointing confessedly to the case of adults, and apply the requisitions they contain to the case of infants.

And the same remark may be applied to several other texts, which contain merely allusions to the case of baptism; such as Galatians iii. 26, 27, and 1 Peter iii. 21.

In the former of these texts, St. Paul tells the Galatians, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Here, say our opponents, *being the children of God by faith*, is synonymous with *having put on Christ by baptism*; therefore baptism was always accompanied by faith."\* To this we reply—first, that the "being the children of God by faith," and the "putting on Christ," are not synonymous. To suppose them so, is to charge the Apostle with a gross absurdity—the proving a thing by itself. Is it possible that Paul could mean to say, "Ye are the children of God by faith, because ye have been made the children of God by faith?" Paul was too sound a reasoner for this.—Secondly we remark, that no word or expression in the passage, when fairly construed, can furnish a shadow of argument against Infant Baptism. Paul was teaching the Galatians that they must not depend upon the Jewish Law for justification. With this view he states the great design of the Law, viz. to lead men unto Christ; and shews that according to the promise of God, "all", i. e. both Jews and Gentiles, were now children of God, not by the law but by faith.

\*Mr Crawley's Pamphlet p. 19.

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To argue from hence, that infants cannot be the children of God, or must not be baptized, because they have no faith, is indeed to wrest the Scriptures from their just meaning and application. We may as well take the Apostles' words to the Ephesians, “By grace are ye saved, through faith;” and then say, But infants have no faith, therefore they cannot be saved.

And just as little application to the case in hand, has the passage quoted from St. Peter. The apostle tells us that baptism saves—not the efficacy of the external rite, but *through the answer of a good conscience towards God*. But did the Apostle intend us to infer that infants therefore were not to be baptized? Yes, say our opponents, because he connects, in this passage, the answer of a good conscience, with baptism; but, observe, he also connects this answer of a good conscience with *salvation*, and that, quite as closely as with baptism; consequently if it proves, in regard to infants, that they cannot be baptized, it also proves that they cannot be saved. Our opponents are not prepared to maintain this position; they must therefore resign the passage under consideration, as one which proves either nothing to their purpose, or else too much for their admission.

The only remaining examples of baptism which our opponents adduce as favourable to their views, are, that of Cornelius, related in Acts x., and of the Corinthians in Acts xviii. They are referred to as instances of households that are said to have believed and feared God, and the fact is noted, to weaken the force of the argument drawn from the baptism of households.\* It cannot however effect this end; for if you prove that ten thousand things are said of households, that cannot refer to infants,

\*Mr. C.'s Pamphlet: pages 15 & 18.

you will not thereby prove that other things had no reference to them, of which they were perfectly capable. It will still be apparent to those who read with candour the several accounts of household baptisms recorded in the New Testament, that the principle, upon which the Apostles proceeded in these cases, was precisely that upon which Abraham and his family, old and young, adults and infants, were circumcised at the command of God. But this we shall have occasion to state more fully in a subsequent chapter. In the mean time, our conclusions in regard to the passages we have now reviewed, are these:—

1. That these accounts are precisely what we might have expected in the early history of the Christian Church. The first instances of baptism would, of course, be those of adults, and even in cases where infants were included, it is not to be supposed the sacred writers would pause to note the circumstance, when no doubt existed as to the title of infants to be admitted, with their parents, to this privilege.

2. That the inference Baptists draw from the religious affections of these adults is a most unwarrantable one. They have no more right to conclude that infants ought not to be baptized, because Paul, Cornelius, the Jailor, the Ethiopian, Lydia, and others, believed before they received this rite, than they have to infer from the same premises that infants are excluded from Heaven. The Scripture says, "believe and be saved," as expressly as it says, "believe and be baptized." If we apply such passages to infants in the one case, consistency demands that we should apply them in the other also. The same reasoning from these passages that excludes infants from baptism, must inevitably exclude them all, without exception, from salvation.

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3. And where, if examples are to guide us, can Baptists find an example of the baptism which they administer? They baptize the *descendants of Christians* at an adult age;—is there an example of this to be found in the New Testament? They baptize at years of maturity, those who from their infancy have been trained up in Christian principles;—can they find in the New Testament an example of such a baptism? We have in Acts a sketch of the Christian Church for 30 years of its existence;—where is there a hint to be discovered that any descendant of any of the early converts, of the 3000 at Pentecost, of the Samaritans, of Cornelius or his friends, of the Jailor's household, or of any other named in Scripture, came forward to baptism at an adult age? No case of the kind stands upon record. Scripture is utterly silent upon the subject. Search again the Epistles to the different Churches. You will find directions of the minutest character, suited to all classes of persons;—why have we no direction about the admission of the children of Christians to baptism, upon their making a profession of faith in Christ? Why have we no hint or allusion, direct or indirect, to any thing of the kind? The plain and obvious answer is,—*because their children were baptized in infancy.* This was the established usage of the Church, therefore we have no example upon record, in the sacred pages, of such baptism as our opponents upon this question now administer.

## CHAPTER IV.

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### THE SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

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CHRISTIAN BAPTISM derives its sanction, not from the practice of John, or that of the Apostles, prior to the death of their Lord; but, from the institution of Christ, as expressed in the solemn commission given to his Apostles, immediately before his Ascension. The terms of that commission are as follows:

In Matt. Chap. xxviii. 18—20.

“ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All  
“ power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye  
“ therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the  
“ name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy  
“ Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatso-  
“ ever I have commanded you: and, lo! I am with you  
“ always even unto the end of the world.

In Mark, Chap. xvi. 15, 16.

“ And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and

"preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

From this commission, the Christian Minister derives his authority to baptize in the name of Jesus. It is expressed in terms, as comprehensive as language can supply; embracing *nations*, not merely parts of them—*all* nations, not merely one more favoured than the rest. Now it is plain, that man has no right to limit the terms of this commission, except in such cases as God has instructed him to do so. Has he then instructed us to do so in the case of infants? We nowhere find that he has; and we are firmly persuaded, after calm inquiry, that we should be opposing His will by such a step. We are convinced that what Baptists say about the word "teach," in the first of the above passages, is founded in error, and that there is nothing in the terms of this commission, or in any other part of Scripture, which can authorize us to shut out infants from being admitted to the Church of God; a privilege which they enjoyed for nineteen centuries before the coming of Christ, and which they have continued to enjoy for eighteen centuries since that event. All the information we can gather from the Old Testament, from the New Testament, and from the history of God's Church, convinces us that we are right in this construction of the above commission. That information we shall now present to our readers.

I. 1. The first evidence we bring to shew that we have rightly interpreted the commission of Christ, is from the *Covenant of God with Abraham*. This is the first part of Scripture, in which we can expect to find any intimation of the divine will, in regard to infants; we

\*See chap. vi. I. §2.

therefore consider it in its proper order. The terms of that covenant are thus stated:

Genesis xvii. 9. "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. 10. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee; *every man-child among you shall be circumcised*. 11. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your fore-skin; and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. 12. And *he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you*, every man-child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. 13. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his fore-skin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; *he hath broken my covenant*. 23. And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and *all that were born in his house*, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their fore-skin in the self-same day, as God had said unto him."

With this account, compare the following passages:

Deut. x. 16. "Circumcise therefore the fore-skin of *your heart*."

Deut. xxx. 6. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise *thine heart*, and *the heart of thy seed*, to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

Rom. ii. 28, 29. "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is out-

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"ward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one  
 "inwardly; and *circumcision is that of the heart*, in the  
 "spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men,  
 "but of God."

Rom. iv. 11. "And he (Abraham) received the sign  
 "of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith  
 "which he had, yet being uncircumcised."

Here we perceive, that as soon as God began to form  
 a Visible Church, by severing his worshippers from the  
 world, and uniting them into a distinct society, he ma-  
 nifested his regard for infants, shewing us that he  
 designed them to form part of that Church, and to be  
 admitted to it, just as older persons were. And we also  
 perceive, that the rite, by which they were to be admitted  
 into God's Church, was to them precisely what baptism  
 is to us,—an emblem of a spiritual change of heart, and a  
 seal of the righteousness of faith;—faith which the in-  
 fants, who were thus admitted into covenant, could not  
 possibly possess at the time. Now these Scriptures  
 clearly prove that we have rightly understood the com-  
 mission that relates to baptism. They discover to us  
 what the will of God is, as to the position which infants  
 ought to hold in the Church, and shew the fallacy of  
 what Baptists say, as to their being incapacitated for bap-  
 tism, because they cannot believe. In these conclusions  
 we are strongly confirmed, by considering what we shall  
 hereafter have occasion to prove,\* that God's Church  
 has been, as to its essential principles, the same in all  
 ages, and that the covenant renewed with Abraham on this  
 occasion, was substantially the covenant of Grace, the  
 very covenant under which we live at this moment. Let  
 these points be carefully weighed; let them be humbly and  
 prayerfully considered, and we think it must be extremely

\*See chap. vii.



difficult to escape the conviction that God's will, once solemnly and plainly signified in regard to infants, is to be our rule and guide, until it is as solemnly and plainly revoked, which it certainly never as yet has been.

2. The same gracious design of God, to include infants in his covenant, and invest them with its privileges, was afterwards signified to the Jewish people, when they were about to enter upon the Land of Promise. Moses upon that occasion, employs this decisive language:

Deut. xxix. 10. "Ye stand this day before the Lord your God: your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel; 11. Your *little ones*, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: 12. That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: 13. That he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy Fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 14. Neither with you only do I make this covenant, and this oath; 15. But with him that standeth here with us this day, before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day: 16. Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; 17. And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart,

“to add drunkenness to thirst: 20. The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.”

Here is a covenant solemnly ratified with Israel, a covenant that includes spiritual as well as temporal blessings. Jehovah pledges himself to be their God, and to constitute them his people. And who were the parties to this covenant? Did it embrace merely *adults*, who were able to comprehend its terms and give their personal assent to it? No;—it included all who were *present*, the entire nation—the *men* of Israel, and their *wives*, their *little ones*; those unconscious infants whom our opponents would now exclude from the Visible Church of God, under the idea of their being too young and too ignorant for admission to it. It went further still;—it included those who were *absent* also—the children who were yet *unborn*—the posterity of that people in after ages. With these unconscious infants, and this unborn posterity, God enters into the covenant, *through the agency of others*, who stand forth on the occasion as their representatives; and by this process he places them all, whether absent or present, as decidedly under the bonds of his covenant, as if they had comprehended every syllable of its demands, and given their personal assent to it. And why does he thus place them under obligations without their personal consent? Because it was for their good and for the interest of his religion. It was “that he might take them in season before they were corrupted and betrayed, and bind them to his covenant, to his people, to his altar, to his throne, to himself.” It was that he might restrain their wickedness, whose hearts were in-

clined to turn away from him, that they might not think themselves at liberty to sin, under the idea that they had not entered into covenant with Him; but be compelled, on the contrary, to feel that all the curses of that covenant would inevitably fall upon them, if they refused to obey it. Christian parents! weigh the contents of this Chapter! Mark how it opposes their opinions who say that an unconscious infant cannot *enter into covenant with God*, or be placed under spiritual obligations, *by the instrumentality of others!* And mark especially the opposition between their views and the mind of God, as to the utility of such an arrangement!

3. To impress more strongly upon the minds of his people, that the privileges and obligations of his covenant extended to their infants as well as themselves, God required with the greatest strictness that the token of his covenant should be applied to them. The child which did not receive it was considered as having "broken the Divine covenant;" and the parent who neglected to apply it, as worthy of the Divine displeasure.

Gen. xvii. 14. "And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."

Exod. iv. 24. "And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him."

"25. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So he let him go."

These passages ought to suggest some solemn thoughts to Christian parents who withhold their children from baptism. They live under the same everlasting covenant

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which God established with Abraham and his spiritual seed. What if the sign of that covenant be changed;—can that justify parents in refusing it to their children? Justly has it been said, that "the change of the token no more justifies parents in neglecting to put it upon their children, than the change of a mark which a man had long put upon his flock would justify his servants in neglecting to mark the lambs."

4. Our convictions here are strengthened by observing the principle of the Divine procedure, viz. the blessing the offspring *for their parents' sake*; a principle which it is plainly intimated would continue to characterize God's dealings under the Gospel dispensation. The following passages obviously declare this principle:

Exod. xx. 5. "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children "unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate "me; 6. And shewing mercy unto thousands of them "that love me, and keep my commandments."

Psalms xxxvii. 26. He (the righteous) is ever merciful "and lendeth, and *his seed is blessed*. Ps. cii. 28. "The "children of thy servants shall continue, and *their seed* "shall be established before me." Ps. cxii. 2. "The "generation of the upright shall be blessed." Ps. ciii. 17, 18. "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to "everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteous- "ness *unto children's children*." Prov. xx. 7. "The "just man walketh in his integrity, *his children are bles- "sed after him*." Isaiah xlv. 3. "I will pour water "upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry "ground; I will pour my Spirit upon *thy seed*, and my "blessing upon *thine offspring*." Isai. lxxv. 17. "Be- "hold, I create new heavens and a new earth; 18. I

"create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.--  
 "23. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for  
 "trouble; for they are *the seed of the blessed of the Lord,*  
*"and their offspring with them."*

Here we see that the children of God's servants were blessed for the sake of their parents;—that the blessings conferred upon them for the sake of their parents were, in many instances, the choicest spiritual blessings;—that this principle of action in regard to them marked invariably God's dealings with his people, from the moment of his collecting them together into a Visible Church; that it pervaded the whole Jewish economy; that it was noted by the inspired writers, held up to the view of the parents as a privilege to them, and consequent motive to obedience; and further, that it was referred to by the Prophets as a principle that would still characterize the Divine procedure under the brighter dispensation of the Gospel. How, we ask, were the Apostles, who were fully acquainted with this circumstance, who from their very childhood were familiarized to this principle of the Divine government, and could trace it in the whole frame and texture of their religion, likely to understand the command of their Master to go forth and baptize all nations? Would they not inevitably act upon the known and established maxim, that parent and child were still to be connected in the participation of the Divine mercies; that "the seed of the righteous" were still to share in the spiritual blessings of the covenant, for their fathers?

\*Other illustrations of this principle might be referred to, if requisite. Noah's case is fully in point, Gen. vii. 1. "And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and *all thy house* into the Ark, for *thee* have I seen righteous before me in this generation." Compare 1 Peter iii. 21. See also Deuter. iv. 37, and x. 15.

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sake? We are persuaded that this conclusion was so obvious, that it would require no inquiry, no reasoning, no investigation on the part of the Apostles; but would inevitably be carried out into action, and influence their proceedings in the administration of baptism, unless their Divine Master had expressly signified to them that a contrary course must be pursued. The question then naturally arises at this point, Do we find any prohibition of this kind in the pages of the New Testament? What light do they reflect upon the subject?

II. In turning to the New Testament, we search in vain for any intimation that infants were to be excluded from the Visible Church of God. But we do find, on the other hand, many plain indications, that their position in regard to that Church was to remain unaltered.

1. *The language of Jesus in reference to them* shews that such was the case. It was language, we must remember, employed at a time when the New dispensation had not superseded the Old,\* and when Christian baptism was not yet instituted. We are not therefore to look for an evidence that Jesus baptized these infants; but we are to look for an intimation of the place they were to occupy in his Church, in its renovated state, under the Gospel. And upon this point, a very decisive intimation is given in the following passages:

Mark x. 13. "And they brought *young children* unto him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them; 14. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, *"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.* 15. "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the

\*See Chap. ii.

"kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. 16. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed him." Matt. xix. 13. "Then were there brought unto them *little children*, that he should put his hands on them *and pray*." Luke xviii. 15. "They brought unto him also *infants*, that he should touch them."

A more striking exhibition of the will of Christ upon this important question could not have been given, than the above passages contain. They establish, beyond all question, that infants are to be brought to Jesus; that they are to be brought to him for his spiritual blessing. As his baptism was not yet instituted, he adopts another well known token of conveying his blessing,—“laying his hands upon them;” as the Patriarchs did upon those whom they blessed,\* and as the Apostles afterwards did upon those who were baptized.† He expresses his deep displeasure at the attempt to withhold them from him; commands that, in future, they should be permitted to approach him without interruption; and assigns the reason for it, “for of such is the kingdom of heaven;” or, in other words, for they have the privilege of admission to my Church, under the Christian as well as under the Jewish dispensation. After such an admonition, could the Apostles, who witnessed this transaction, hesitate for a moment as to the construction they were to place upon their commission to baptize all nations? Could they doubt for an instant, the propriety of administering the seal of the Christian covenant to those whom Jesus had embraced and blessed, and commanded to be brought to him, and declared to be sharers in the privileges of his Church? No; they

\*Gen. xlviii. 14, 15. †Acts viii. 14. & xix. 5, 6. Heb. vi. 3.

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would have felt that by such a step they were incurring afresh his displeasure, and acting in opposition both to the letter and spirit of his command.

2. The very nature of the Christian Church would teach them, and ought to instruct us, how to proceed in this matter. Our opponents upon the question of Infant Baptism regard the Christian Church as entirely distinct in its nature from the Jewish Church; and thence infer that the practice of admitting infants to membership, was entirely superseded at the introduction of the Christian dispensation. But in this they are certainly mistaken.\* The Church of God, whether under the Patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian dispensation, has been, as to its essential principles, the same in every age; and it is upon these principles that the practice we are contending for depends. The language of our Lord in his parables, of the Apostles in their letters, and even of the Prophets in their predictions, establishes the correctness of this statement. From a variety of passages that might be appealed to, we select the following:

Matt. xxi. 43. "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

Observe,—“The kingdom of God,” always essentially the same, is transferred from the great body of the Jews to the Gentiles.

Rom. xi. 23. “And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. 24. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?”

\*See Chap. vii.



Observe,—There is one “olive tree,” from which the Jews are broken off; into which the Gentiles are grafted; and in which the Jews themselves shall hereafter be re-instated.

Ephes. ii. 12. “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; 12. But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.”

Observe,—The Gentiles are associated with the Jews under the Gospel; not by changing the essential principles of the Jewish Church, but by taking down the partition wall of the ceremonial law, and admitting the Gentiles to the same covenant of promise which the Jews had before enjoyed.

Isai. xlix. 22. “Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring *thy sons* in their arms, and *thy daughters* shall be carried upon their shoulders.”

Observe,—God’s Church under the Jewish economy is comforted, not with the prospect of annihilation, but of an accession of sons, under the Gospel.

Acts xv. 14. “Simson hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16. After this I will return, and *will build again the tabernacle of David*, which is fallen down; and *I will build again the ruins thereof*, and I will set it up: 17. That the residue of men might

"seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom  
"my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these  
"things."

Observe,—The renovation of God's church under the  
Christian dispensation is represented, not as forming a  
new tabernacle, but as building again the tabernacle of  
David, which had fallen into decay.

Isaiah liv. 2. "*Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let  
"them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations:  
"spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;  
"3. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on  
"the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and  
"make the desolate cities to be inhabited."*

Observe,—The tent of God's Church was not to be taken  
down, but its place enlarged, its curtains stretched, its  
cords lengthened, and its stakes strengthened under the  
Gospel.

Isaiah lx. 1. "*Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and  
"the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: 2. For behold  
"the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness  
"the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his  
"glory shall be seen upon thee. 3. And the Gentiles shall  
"come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy  
"rising."*

Observe,—That same Church which existed, and which  
sat as a disconsolate female, in a low and degraded  
state, in Isaiah's day, was to arise and shine under the  
meridian light of the Gospel; it was to her light, and to  
the brightness of her rising, that Gentiles and their kings  
were to come.

Proofs might be multiplied upon this point, but the pas-  
sages already quoted must be sufficient to shew, that the  
Visible Church of God, has been, as to its essential prin-

ciples, one Church from its first formation to the present hour: indeed it requires only a careful consideration of the design and ends of a Visible Church, to be fully assured of this truth, independently of any particular assertion upon the subject in Scripture. But if this be admitted, there can be no question as to the right interpretation of the commission given to the Apostles, or as to the relation, in which the infant offspring of God's professing people stand to the Gospel Church. They have undoubtedly a right to membership, and to the initiatory Sacrament of that Church; for who, without a distinct and positive command from Christ, is authorized to exclude them from privileges, which, for nearly two thousand years before his Advent in the flesh, they had freely enjoyed?

3. And here the evidence powerfully strengthens, while we observe the *close analogy between the Jewish and Christian Sacraments*. Among the peculiar institutions of the Jewish economy, two were more remarkable than the rest;—Circumcision, and the Passover. The former was the ordinance of initiation, the latter a commemorative and typical rite, pointing, in each instance, to a signal deliverance of God's people. Now it is impossible to take even a hasty glance at Christianity, and not discern that its two distinguishing ordinances, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, have taken the place of the institutions just alluded to; that while they are rites more simple in their nature, and better adapted to a dispensation which extends to all nations, they closely correspond in their design and uses with the Jewish ordinances above referred to. The parallel is striking in both instances, but we are only concerned at present to trace it in regard to circumcision and baptism.

With this view, let us attentively compare the following Scriptures:

Gen. xvii. 12. "He that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you. 14. The uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his fore-skin is not circumcised, *that soul shall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my Covenant.*"

John iii. 5. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man" (any one) "be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Here one leading design of these corresponding rites is apparent; they were appointed as the *formal means of introducing men into the Visible Church of God*, and, as such, essential to the enjoyment of communion with that Church.

Romans ii. 29. "Circumcision is *that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter.*"

1 Peter iii. 21. "Baptism doth also now save us, *not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.*"

Here you perceive that both are emblematical of inward purity,—of regeneration of the heart.

Rom. iv. 11: "He received the sign of circumcision, *a seal of the righteousness of faith.*"

Acts xxii. 16. "Arise and be baptized and *wash away thy sins.*"

Hence it is apparent that both are emblems or pledges of justification; or, in other words, of the forgiveness of sins.

Rom. ii. 25. "Circumcision verily profiteth, *if thou keep the Law.*" Gal. v. 3. "I testify again to every man that is circumcised, *that he is a debtor to do the whole Law.*"

Rom. vi. 4. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we *also should walk in newness of life.*"

Hence it is obvious that circumcision and baptism were both pledges of obedience to the Divine Law.

Rom. iii. 30. "It is one God that shall justify the *circumcision by faith*, and the uncircumcision *through faith.*"

Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*"

Here you find that the "circumcised," and the "baptized," are saved in the same way, viz. by faith.

Col. ii. 11. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; 12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

Here the analogy we are tracing in various particulars is pointed to by St. Paul. It is quite immaterial to the argument, whether we understand the words "circumcision of Christ," to mean the outward sign or inward grace of Christian baptism. In either case, it is plain that St. Paul is guarding the Colossians against the tenets of Judaizing teachers, who wished them to submit to circumcision. And he does this by teaching them, that when they received Christian baptism, they had realized all that circumcision was designed to represent. No ingenuity can evade the evidence thus afforded, that in the Apostle's mind, the analogy we are contending for between these rites is plainly seen and acknowledged.\*

\*See objections considered. Chap. vii.

The above comparison then clearly shews the correspondence between these rites. Whether we consider the privileges to which they were introductory, the blessings of which they were emblems, the faith and obedience which they demanded, or the light in which St. Paul himself regarded them, we are led to the same conclusion, that the one holds precisely the same rank, and is appointed for identically the same ends, under the Christian dispensation, that the other was under the Jewish. And this single circumstance, if duly weighed, ought to decide the question before us. If baptism has taken the place of circumcision, we ought to baptize those under the Gospel whom we should have circumcised under the Law; that is, infants as well as adults. We have no right to introduce a limitation which our Divine Lawgiver has not introduced; or to make, without his sanction, an alteration of such importance in the long established usages of his Church.

4. That the Apostles did not introduce an innovation of this kind, seems evident from what is recorded of *their actual practice in baptizing the households of those who embraced the Christian Faith*. There are three instances of this kind upon record.

Acts xvi. 14. "And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."  
 "15. And when she was baptized *and her household*, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there."

Acts xvi. 31. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and *thy house*." 32. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to

"all that were in his house. 33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and "was baptized, he and *all his, straightway.* 34. And "when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all "his house."

1 Cor. i. 16. "And I baptized also *the household of "Stephanas."*

Here we have the practice of the Apostles, in the administration of baptism. And mark the principle upon which they proceed. Upon the head of a family's embracing the Christian faith, they baptize that person and his "household." Now this is precisely the principle upon which their ancestors proceeded in the administration of circumcision. Abraham was circumcised, and "all that were born in his house." Lydia is baptized, and "her household;" the Jailor and "all his;" Stephanas, and "his household." The efforts which our opponents make to prove there could have been no infants in any of these families, we must think, after a candid examination, are signal failures, and this we shall endeavour to shew in a subsequent chapter.† But it is a question, after all, of little moment in the case; for these household-baptisms are only specimens of the general practice of the Apostles, in the administration of baptism. It is impossible to read these accounts, and not perceive, that they speak of baptizing households as a matter of course, when the head of the family embraced the Christian faith. Are we then to suppose that in all their travels the Apostles never baptized a household in which infants were to be found? Could the flourishing churches founded by Paul, for example, in Asia, Greece, and Rome, exhibit no family with infants? We are persuaded that a calm considera-

\*Gen. xvii. 23.

†Chap. viii.

tion of what is told us of the Apostolic practice in baptizing households must convince the enquirer, that what has been already said in regard to the nature of the Christian church, and the analogy between circumcision and baptism is founded in truth, and that the right of infants to membership in the church of God, and to the initiatory ordinance of that church, has never been superseded from the days of Abraham to the present hour.

5. With this view of the case, *the language of the Apostles*, in their preaching and writings accords; but to any other it stands in the most decided opposition.

Acts ii. 38. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39. For the promise is unto you, and to *your children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

This language is in full accordance with the views we have been advancing. We see here, as in all the former instances, the children associated with the parents in the enjoyment of the precious privileges of the Divine covenant. Baptists interpret the term "children" here as referring exclusively to the adult descendants of the Jews. But the argument drawn from Joel's words to support this view is unsound.\* The term must mean their offspring universally, whether adult or infant. And if so, their offspring whether adult or infant ought to be baptized; for St. Peter declares, that the same promise extends to them which he makes the ground of baptism to their parents. Indeed the very promise here referred to is included in the covenant of Abraham, which we know extended to infants as well as adults.

\*See objections considered,—Chap. vi.

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1. Cor. vii. 14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: *else were your children unclean*; but *now are they holy*."

In this passage, the Apostle assumes it as an incontrovertible fact, that the children of a believing parent were "holy." Now the term "holy" in Scripture, strictly means "set apart, or consecrated to God." Hence it was applied to the Jews and their offspring, to distinguish them from the heathen,\* and in the New Testament to the members of the Christian church.† The question then is, how came it to be universally known that the children of a believing parent, even where the other parent was an unbeliever, were "holy," or consecrated to God? The plain answer is, by their baptism. This was an open, visible, known acknowledgment on the part of the church, that they were regarded in this light; and the fact of their being thus regarded, might therefore be assumed as the basis of reasoning, in regard to the state of the unbelieving parent. The views which Baptists take of this passage, are liable to insurmountable objections.‡

We therefore adhere to the interpretation which has the sanction of antiquity, and the decided countenance of Scripture, and of the ablest critics that have ever commented upon its contents, by believing it to refer to infant baptism. And thus we are prepared to mark the propriety of the Apostle's mode of addressing children, in the following passages.

Col. iii. 20. "Children, obey your parents in all things; for that is well pleasing unto the Lord."

Ephes. vi. 1. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

\*Deut. vii. 6. & xiv. 1, 2. Ezra ix. 2. Isai. vi. 13.

†1 Peter ii. 9,

‡See Chapter viii.

"4. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

How striking is the evidence afforded by these expressions! Here, in epistles written to Christian churches, the children are addressed as members of those churches. Their relative duties are pressed upon them as such, and their parents are exhorted to instruct them as members of Christ. How can this be accounted for, but upon the supposition of its being the prevailing custom of the Church to receive into her fellowship by baptism the infant offspring of believers? Our opponents say, "these children may have believed and been baptized;" but we are constrained to think it far more probable, that they were baptized, and then believed. We cannot but see, when we read these passages with attention, that they are addressed to the children of Christian parents generally, as if it were a matter of course that such were members of the church, and that the parents are addressed, in regard to their offspring, upon the same supposition. It is, in fact, precisely the language which a Christian Bishop would address to a church which was formed upon pædobaptist principles; but such as no Baptist Pastor would think of employing in addressing a church which was formed upon the Baptist system. Consistently with their views, they can never address the children of their churches generally as members, as "in the Lord," but as "out of the Lord," as having neither part nor lot in the blessed privileges of the covenant. We are compelled then to believe that their system is at variance with Scripture, and that the infant offspring of God's professing church ought by all means to be associated with their parents in the participation of Christian baptism.

What other conclusion can possibly be drawn from the

passages we have now reviewed? We have our Lord's commission to baptize, expressed in the most comprehensive terms, specifying neither old nor young, male nor female; but including every class under the general expression "all nations." We have, prior to that command, the most ample proofs that infants can enter into covenant with God; that it was his will they should do so; that his Divine pleasure was that they should be associated with their parents as members of his church, and receive the external sign of membership. This state of things existed from the first formation of a visible church. When the Mosaic dispensation was introduced, no change was made in regard to it; the same state of things continued. Fifteen centuries more elapse;—no change is made. The Christian economy supersedes the Jewish;—no hint, however remote, is given of the slightest alteration in this respect. Jesus, on the contrary, stands forth at the very crisis when one dispensation is about to supersede the other, and declares that infants are to be members of his Church and kingdom. He adds moreover, in the course of his instructions, that baptism is the regular mode of admission to that kingdom. All this is strengthened by the evidence that the church of God has ever been one in its essential principles,—that circumcision and baptism are strictly analagous,—that the Apostles themselves viewed them in this light,—that they proceeded upon this principle in the baptism of households, where there must have been infants as well as adults,—and in their writings speak of children as members of the Christian church, which they could not have done, unless it had been the custom to baptize them.

It must be difficult, we think, to contemplate calmly the body of evidence here presented to us, and not be compelled to feel that it affords an ample warrant for the

*In this array of arguments, our  
 minds are so much engaged  
 that we are almost  
 unable to resist the force of  
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practice of infant baptism. The proofs are various in their nature, yet all in harmony as to their testimony. They refer to different periods of the Church of God, yet there is the most perfect correspondence between them. They not only bear a separate evidence to the question of baptism, but mutually corroborate each other. The language addressed to children is just what household-baptism would lead us to expect; household-baptisms are exactly what the analogy between circumcision and baptism would suggest. The language of Jesus, in regard to little children, is precisely what the nature of his church, viewed as a continuation of God's church, as it existed under prior dispensations, would lead him to employ; and the comprehensive terms of his command in regard to baptism correspond minutely with the collective testimony borne by these various witnesses. We have here, then, the voice of God, speaking through the medium of his church, in various ways, and for the space of nearly two thousand years, and teaching us his will in regard to the infant offspring of his people; teaching us, that as they are destined to be members of his glorified church in heaven, they are to be members also of his visible church on earth, and as such admitted to the sign and seal of membership. But is this the whole evidence afforded us on this important question? No;—as we are permitted to take our stand in the apostolic age, and look back for nineteen centuries for the proofs of God's will in this case, so from the same period we may look onward for eighteen centuries more, and find at every stage, the evidence rising in strength and clearness before us. The history of the Christian Church, from the days of the Apostles to the present hour, affords irresistible proof, that infant baptism has been the uniform practice from its first formation. We proceed to this point in the following chapter.

*These claims are supported by  
Gentiles who were in  
all probability have been in-  
troduced in the earliest  
of the apostolic age, and to  
an attempt made in that  
direction by the apostles  
and their disciples.*

## CHAPTER V.

### THE EVIDENCE AFFORDED BY THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE lives of the two eminent Apostles, St. Peter, and St. Paul, were probably prolonged until the year 68, when they are said to have suffered martyrdom at Rome. St. Jude, St. Thomas, and St. Luke, were permitted to labour, though in different parts of their Lord's vineyard, to a somewhat later period, the latter being supposed to have suffered martyrdom in Greece about the year 74. Timothy's labours at Ephesus were continued till the year 97, and the Apostle St. John, outliving all the rest of the twelve, was spared to preside over the Church, and foster it with his prayers and counsels, until the year 100.

It is obvious, then, that any credible testimony from history, which shows the practice of the Christian Church, within the limits of the first century, establishes what its usage was under the immediate guidance of the Apostles. And when we pass the bounds of this century, we find the Church under the direction of those holy men, upon whose heads the Apostles had laid their hands, and to whom they had committed the care of Christ's flock; men who had listened to their instructions, imbibed their spirit, and walked in their footsteps. Such men for example as Ignatius of Antioch, Simeon, the brother (or cousin-german) of our Lord, at Jerusalem, Onesimus of Ephesus, Damas of Magnesia, and the blessed Polycarp of Smyrna, who presided over the Church in that city until he gained the crown of martyrdom in the year 166. Any credible testimony, which points to the practice of the Church within this period, or of men who were born at this time, ought surely to have the greatest weight in the determination of the question before us; a question which relates to a plain matter of fact, with respect to which, honest men who lived at this period, and were acquainted with the affairs of the Christian church, were as competent to judge and to testify, as the Apostles themselves.

I. Such a man was *Justin Martyr*, the first witness we shall bring forward upon this question.

Justin was born at Neapolis, in Samaria, before the close of the first century. He received in his childhood a philosophical education, and appears to have been filled, at an early period, with an ardent desire to attain the knowledge of God. The means of gaining that knowledge were placed by Providence within his reach, and he became a sincere convert to the Christian faith. In the reign of Antoninus Pius he visited Rome. Here he

wrote a confutation of the heretics which infested the Church; directing his efforts especially against the errors of Marcian.. About the year 140,\* he published his first apology for the Christians, addressed to Antoninus Pius. In this admirable work, Justin refutes the calumnies which were urged against the Christians; asserts the purity of their lives and doctrines; describes their customs in public worship, and in the administration of the Sacrament; and affords ample proof of the strong line of distinction preserved between Christians and heretics. Soon after this, Justin went to Ephesus, where he held a discussion with Trypho the Jew, in which again he nobly vindicated the Christians from the calumnies which were cast upon them. Returning to Rome, he disputed with Crescens, the philosopher, and presented, about the year 164, his second apology to Antoninus Philosophus, the successor of Pius, and the implacable enemy of Christians. The bold and faithful conduct of Justin, procured for him the fate which might have been anticipated under a government, where to be proved a Christian, was, without any further evidence, to be proved an enemy to the state, and a fit subject for the infliction of a capital punishment. He was accused, tried, and after witnessing a good confession before his arbitrary Judge, and displaying the meekness and gentleness, and unshaken faith of a genuine follower of Christ, was first scourged, and then beheaded.

From Justin's first† Apology, we take the following testimony.

"Many persons of both sexes, some sixty, some seven-

\*Some place the date of this Apology 10 years later. It cannot be fixed with precision.—See the account of the writings and opinions of Justin Martyr, by the Bp. of Lincoln, p. 11.

†This apology stands second, in the Paris Edition from which we quote, but is properly the first.

ty years of age, who were made disciples to Christ in their childhood, continue uncorrupted.”\*

Upon this passage we remark. 1st. That the term translated “made disciples,” is the same term employed by our Lord in his commission to the Apostles, when he says, “Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them &c.” That Justin means here to use it in the same connexion with the initiatory Sacrament of the Gospel, most persons, we think, who consider the circumstances of the case, will admit. It would never, we presume, unless suggested by the necessity of sustaining some peculiar sentiments, enter into the mind, that he intended any thing less in regard to these persons than a complete dedication to Christ. 2dly. We observe that these persons were thus “made disciples” in their “childhood.” The word rendered *childhood*, is sometimes employed in reference to infants, in the common acceptation of that term,† and sometimes to children more advanced in age.‡ As Justin’s object is to shew the length of time, these persons had continued “uncorrupted”, we should infer that *he* uses the term, at least, in reference to *early childhood*. At all events, his testimony shews that children were discipled to Christ, which, as we conceive, implies their baptism. 3dly. We remark that the period when these children were thus discipled to Christ, was at least 20 years before the expiration of the first century, shortly after the martyrdom of St. Paul, while St. John, Timothy, Titus, and other contemporaries of the Apostles, were presiding over the Christian Church. Whatever errors, in point of doctrine, or practice, may have been adopted in after times, the clear line of distinction between the faithful and hereti-

\* Καὶ πολλοὶ τινες καὶ πολλοὶ ἐχκοιτοῦνται καὶ ἐδομηκοῦνται, οἱ ἐν παιδῶν ἐμαθητευθῆσαν τῷ Χριστῷ, ἀφ’ ὧν διαμεινοῦσι.

Justin’s opera, p. 65. Ed. Paris. 1615.

† Matt. ii. 16.

‡ Ibid. xxi. 15.



cal, was, at this period, firmly maintained. Persecuted alike, by Jews and Gentiles, the Church was by no means likely, either from external friendship with these bodies of men, or from internal declension in vital piety, to engraft their errors and dogmas upon the pure doctrines of Christ. We regard this passage, therefore, when taken in connexion with the preceding scriptural evidence, and with the cotemporaneous testimony of Irenæus, which we shall presently quote, as affording corroborative evidence, that infant baptism was the practice of the Church in the Apostolic age, and as still more decisively shewing the incorrectness of an opinion maintained by our Baptist opponents, that the baptism of young children was a novel practice in the days of Tertullian.\*

It is also worthy of remark, before we quit the evidence afforded by Justin, that he appears to have marked the analogy between circumcision and baptism, and the reference which both these rites had to a spiritual circumcision, which had always, even in Enoch's day, characterized the true servants of God. In his dialogue with Trypho he says,

“And we who through him have had access unto God, have not received that carnal circumcision, but spiritual circumcision; which Enoch, and persons like him, attended to; and inasmuch as we were sinners, we have received it by means of baptism through the mercy of God, and it is permitted to all to receive it in the same way.”†

II. The next witness we appeal to is *Irenæus*.

\*Mr C.'s pamphlet, page 91.

† Καὶ ἡμεῖς οἱ διὰ ταύτης προσχωρήσαντες τῷ Θεῷ ἢ τὴν κατὰ σῶμα παρελάβομεν περιτομήν, ἀλλὰ πνευματικὴν, ἣν Ἐνὼχ καὶ οἱ ὅμοιοι ἐφυλάξαν· ἡμεῖς δὲ διὰ βαπτισματος αὐτῆς, ἐπειδὴν ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἐγεννηθῆμεν, διὰ τοῦ ἐλεος τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐλάβομεν, καὶ πᾶσιν ἐρετόν ὁμοίως λαμβάνειν.

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This celebrated man was born about the same period as Justin. His residence in early youth was in the neighbourhood of Smyrna, where he received the instructions of Polycarp, the holy Bishop of that city. He subsequently became a Presbyter in the Church of Lyons in France. He held that office during the awful persecution, which the faithful members of that church sustained with so much meekness and fortitude, and is supposed to have been the author of the beautiful epistle to their brethren in Asia, describing with so much pathos and holy unction, the sufferings of their martyrs. Surviving this sanguinary conflict, he became the Bishop of this Church, and presided for many years over its spiritual concerns. Here, at an advanced age, he wrote his book against heresies, in which he discovered great penetration, and a thorough acquaintance with all the fanciful schemes which had been advocated by the opposers of truth. Writing to Florinus, whom he reproved for unsound doctrine, he remarks, "I can describe the very spot on which Polycarp sat and expounded, his going in and coming out, the manner of his life, the figure of his body, the sermons he preached to the multitude; how he related to us his converse with John, and the rest of those who had seen the Lord; how he mentioned their particular expressions, and what things he had heard from them of the Lord, of his miracles, and of his doctrine. As Polycarp had received from the eye-witnesses of the word of life, he told us all things agreeable to the Scriptures. These things, through the mercy of God, I heard with seriousness: I wrote them, not on paper, but on my heart; and ever since, through the grace of God, I retain a genuine remembrance of them."\* This venerable man, who had

\*See Milner's account of Irenæus, Cent. iii. Chap. 1.

been thus instructed in his youth, and preserved by the grace of God to adorn his church in after years, and at the close of a long life to seal his testimony with his blood, was surely a competent witness upon the question before us. Hear then his testimony.

“Christ came to save all persons by himself, all, I say, who by him are regenerated unto God; infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elder persons.\*

The term *regenerated* in this passage, means baptized. In this sense Irenæus constantly employs it. He says for example, in reference to our Lord's authorizing his Apostles to baptize: “When he gave his disciples the power of *regenerating* unto God, he said unto them, Go and teach all nations, *baptizing* them.† Justin uses the term in the same sense. Speaking of the baptism of the Christian converts he says, “They are then conducted by us to a place where there is water, and are *regenerated* in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated; for they are then *washed* in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the Universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit.”‡ In a similar manner, Tertullian, Cyril, Gregory Nazianzen, St Augustine, in short the Christian Fathers generally, use this expression. With the propriety or impropriety of this employment in it, we are not at present concerned. Our Lord's reference to “being born of water,” and St. Paul's allusion to “the washing of regeneration,” as well as the common phraseology of the Jews with regard to the baptism of their proselytes, whom they termed regenerated or new-

\*Omnes enim venit per semet-ipsam salvere; omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum; infantes, et parvulos, et pueros, et juvenes, et seniores.” Adv. Hæreses. Lib. ii. c. 39.

Oxon. edit: 1702.

†Lib. iii. c. 19.

‡Apol. i. p. 93.

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born persons, probably gave rise to this style of speaking. But I repeat, it is not the propriety of the expression, but the fact of its being employed by the Fathers, and by Iræneus in particular, that is here insisted on; and this fact, it is presumed, no one who has enquired into the point will undertake to question. Bearing this circumstance then in mind, we have, in the passage quoted above, a most convincing evidence in favour of Infant Baptism. We have the testimony of a pious and learned Bishop of the Christian Church,—a man whose capacious mind discriminated with accuracy between the features of heresy and truth; a man who had imbibed the truth from the companions and fellow-labourers of the Apostles; a man whose venerable eye glanced at one view at the history of an entire century, beginning with the closing days of the Apostles themselves;—and what is that testimony? That “infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and older persons,” were all classed among the baptized in the Christian Church. Let the candid inquirer after truth weigh this testimony with care. For ourselves we freely confess, we regard it as one, which neither art nor criticism will ever be able to shake. While it continues to be read in the records of antiquity, so long will it be an admitted fact, that from the very age of the Apostles, Infant Baptism has prevailed in the Christian Church.

III. *Tertullian* is the next witness we appeal to. He continues the chain of evidence from the latter part of the second unto the early part of the third century. He was a native of the province of Africa, and city of Carthage, and born about the year 145. He at first embraced the profession of the law, and subsequently became a Presbyter in the Church; but whether at Rome or Carthage is doubtful. He did not however continue in its communion, but after a few years embraced the opi-

nions of Montanus, a celebrated heresiarch, who pretended to possess the gift of prophecy, and to have the "fulness of the Holy Spirit," or Paraclete, imparted to him, to perfect the Christian system of doctrine and practice. Tertullian was possessed undoubtedly of genius and extensive learning, but was not equally remarkable for the soundness of his judgment. The veneration he entertained for the extravagant notions of Montanus was in itself sufficient evidence of this. It was shown also by his credulity with regard to a variety of absurd stories and visions, to which he appears to have given entire credence.\* The sincerity of his piety there is no ground to question; but it was marked by a degree of austerity, even prior to his adopting the opinions of Montanus.† He is consequently to be trusted, where he speaks, as an historian, of matters of fact, which must have fallen under his personal observation; but not to be relied on, where he expresses his private judgment upon a question of doctrine. His testimony to the existing practice of infant Baptism, we quote from his tract on Baptism, which is generally thought to have been written before he adopted the views of Montanus.‡

"According to every one's condition and disposition, and also their age, the delaying of baptism is more advantageous, especially in the case of little children. For what need is there, except in case of necessity, that the Godfathers should be brought into danger? Because they may either fail of their promises by death, or they may

\*See his account of the man chastised in a vision: *De Idololatria*, Cap. xv.; also his account of the city suspended forty days from Heaven: *Adv. Marcionem*, Lib. iii. c. 24.

†The Tract, *De Pœnitentiâ*, written prior to his secession from the church, contains evidences of this spirit.

‡Such is the prevailing opinion. It contains nevertheless some

be deceived by a child's proving of wicked dispositions. Our Lord says, indeed, "Do not forbid them to come unto me." Let them come therefore when they are grown up: let them come when they can learn; when they can be taught whither it is they come. Let them be made Christians when they can know Christ. What need their innocent age make such haste to the forgiveness of sins? Men proceed more cautiously in secular affairs, than to commit the care of Divine things to such as are not entrusted with earthly substance. Let them know how to ask salvation, that you may appear to give it to one that asketh. For no less reason unmarried persons ought to be delayed, because they are exposed to temptations,—as well virgins that are come to maturity, as those that are in widowhood by the loss of a consort,—until they either marry or be confirmed in continence."<sup>2</sup>

In this passage we have Tertullian's private opinion, and his testimony as to a matter of fact.

1. His private opinion was, that it was more prudent to

allusions which render this point doubtful. The notion that "three persons compose a church" appears in it, which was one of the peculiar tenets he insists upon in his writings after embracing the belief in "The New Prophecy."

"Itaque pro cujusque personæ conditione ac dispositione, etiam ætate, cunctatio baptismi utilior est; præcipuè tamen circa parvulos. Quid enim necesse est, si non tam necesse, sponsos etiam periculo ingeri; quia et ipsi per mortalitatem destituere promissiones suas possunt, et proventu male indolis falli. Ait quidam Dominus, 'Nolite illos prohibere ad me venire.' Veniant ergo dum adolescent; veniant dum discunt, dum quo veniant docentur: fiant Christiani quam Christum nosse potuerint. Quid festinat innocens ætas ad remissionem peccatorum? Cautius agitur in secularibus, ut cui substantia terrena non creditur, Divina credatur. Nōrint petere salutem, ut potenti dedisse videaris. Non minori de causâ inuupti quoque proæstiniandi, in quibus tentatio præparata est; tam virginibus per maturitatem, quam viduis per vacationem; donec aut nubant, aut continentie corroborentur."—*De Baptis.* Cap. 18.

delay the baptism of little children, unmarried persons, and widows; and the grounds of this opinion were prudential considerations;—the danger of the sponsors dying,—the children proving wicked,—temptations being too powerful. But of what value is this private opinion of Tertullian? None of his cotemporaries held such sentiments, and no man of common sense, who is acquainted with the elements of christianity, holds them at the present hour. Where is the Baptist who believes that all virgins, widows, and unmarried persons ought to be refused baptism, lest temptations should afterwards prove too powerful for them; or who imagines, that such was the prevailing opinion of the church in Tertullian's day? If there be any so extravagant, we admit that they are entitled to all the advantage which Tertullian's opinion can afford them; but if Baptists repudiate with indignation such sentiments, they must be silent about his opinion in regard to infants. Indeed, as it regards infants themselves, they would be very sorry to adopt them without reserve; for Tertullian undoubtedly admitted the propriety of baptizing them, if there was any danger of their dying in infancy. His private opinion, therefore, can afford no aid to their cause.

2. On the other hand, we have in this passage his testimony as to a matter of fact, where the extent of his judgment or the peculiarity of his opinions had no influence; and the fact which his language testifies, is the existence and prevalence of Infant Baptism within the church. If it had not been customary to present infants for baptism, there would have been no necessity for Tertullian to recommend the opposite custom; if they had not "hastened to the remission of sins," he need not have advised their delaying it; if observation upon past events had not taught him that sponsors often died, before their charge arrived at years of discretion, and that they who had been

responded for at the font often proved in after life to be wicked characters, he never would have thought of suggesting these prudential considerations. It is abundantly evident, I conceive, that this writer opposes himself not only to an existing custom, but to what must have been an existing custom long before, in order to warrant the peculiar language he employs; and he is therefore to be ranked among the decided witnesses of the existence and prevalence of Infant Baptism, in the middle of the second century.

IV. *Origen* is the next writer, to whom we shall refer for information. This celebrated man was a native of Alexandria, and born near the close of the second century. His father, who suffered martyrdom under the persecution of Severus in the early part of the third century, appears to have been a truly pious man, and took especial pains in giving a Christian education to his son. His son, at an early age, gave indications of splendid genius and uncompromising zeal. His sentiments in after life were indeed tinctured with the principles of a false philosophy, which led him to adopt the injurious system of allegorizing the language of Scripture; but his learning was immense, the labours of his pen astonishing, and his acquaintance with the affairs of the church as extensive as the empire in which the church was planted; for at different periods of his life, he had resided in all the various parts of it. Under the persecution of Decius, he was subjected to cruel tortures, which he sustained with unshaken constancy. He died at the age of 70, in the year 255. From his writings we extract the following passages.

Hom: in Lucam, 14.

"Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? or how did they commit them? or how can any reason be given for baptizing them, but only according



to that sense which we mentioned a little before; none is free from pollution though his life be but the length of one day upon the earth. And for this reason infants are baptised, because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away.\*

Hom: in Levit: 8.

“What is the reason why the Baptism of the Church which is given for remission of sins, is by the usage of the church given to infants also; whereas if there were nothing in infants that wanted remission and indulgence, the grace of baptism might seem superfluous to them?”†

Origen in this part of his writings is endeavouring to establish the doctrine of Original Sin, and adduces the practice of Infant Baptism as a proof of it.

Comment in Epist: ad Rom.

“For this also it was that the church had from the apostles a tradition to give baptism even to infants. For they, to whom the divine mysteries were committed, knew that there is in all persons the natural pollution of sin, which must be done away by water and the Spirit, by reason of which the body itself is also called the body of sin.”‡

\*“Parvuli baptizantur in remissionem peccatorum. Quorum peccatorum? vel quo tempore peccaverunt? aut quomodo potest ulla lavacri in parvulis ratio subsistere, nisi juxta illum sensum de quo paulo antè diximus; nullus mundus à sorde, nec si unius diei quidem fuerit vita ejus super terram? Et quia per baptismi sacramentum natiuitatis sordes deponuntur, propterea baptizantur et parvuli.”

†“Addi his etiam illud potest, ut requiratur quid causæ sit, cùm baptisma ecclesiæ in remissionem peccatorum detur, secundùm ecclesiæ observantiam etiam parvulis baptismum dari: cùm utique, si nihil esset in parvulis quod ad remissionem deberet et indulgentiam pertinere, gratia baptismi superflua videretur.”

‡“Pro hoc et ecclesia ab Apostolis traditionem suscepit etiam parvulis baptismum dare. Sciebant enim illi, quibus mysteriorum

These attestations need no comment. They speak for themselves. And, remember, they are the attestations of one who was eminently qualified to teach us what the practice of the christian church at that time was. He was born only 85 years after the death of St. John. His forefathers had been christians for several generations, so that he had only to look into the history of his own family to know what the church practised in apostolic times. He was born at Alexandria, and had lived at Greece, Rome, Cappadocia, Arabia, Syria, and Palestine, so that the history of all Christendom was known to him, not from books alone, but from actual observation. Must not the testimony of such a man command respect?—A question has been raised by our opponents, as to the genuineness of these passages, but without any just foundation for it. A fair enquiry into the matter, must, as we shall shew hereafter,\* remove every reasonable doubt upon the subject.

V. *Cyprian* is the next witness we adduce.

This holy man, whose name must ever live in the minds of God's faithful servants, was converted to Christianity in the year 246. He had been previously a professor of oratory at Carthage, but having embraced the truth in the love of it, and made rapid advances in the knowledge of Christ was ordained a Presbyter, and elevated to the See of Carthage, as early as the year 248. He presided over that church for 11 years, with uncommon wisdom, zeal, and devotedness to his heavenly Master's cause. Fervent in spirit, weaned from the world, filled with

secreta commissæ sunt divinorum, quia essent in omnibus genuinæ sordes peccati, quæ per aquam et Spiritum ablui deberent; propter quas etiam corpus ipsum 'corpus peccati' nominatur."

\*See Chap. ix.

christian love, wise and discriminating in the exercise of discipline, patient in suffering, firm in the hour of trial, he placed before the eyes not only of the church, but of the world, such a bright example of the beauty of holiness, as appears in some instances to have awed even the hearts of his heathen persecutors. It was the will of God that one who had thus lived for the glory of Christ, should prove his willingness to die in his cause. He was accordingly apprehended and brought to trial in the persecution under Valerian. When recommended by his judge, to consult his safety, by sacrificing to the gods, Cyprian replied: "My safety and my strength is Christ the Lord, whom I desire to serve forever." "Let Thascius Cyprian, who refuses to sacrifice to the gods, be put to death by the sword!" said the proconsul. "God be praised!" said the Martyr;--and his head was severed from his body.

The testimony of Cyprian in reference to Infant Baptism is very decisive. Fidus, an African Bishop, had consulted him, as to whether the baptism of infants ought not to be delayed for a few days after their birth, and whether in this respect it would be proper to adopt the rule of circumcision, and fix upon the eighth day. Cyprian, in council with sixty-six African Bishops, many of whom afterwards surrendered their lives in the cause of Christ, decided this case, and Cyprian communicated their decision in the following terms.

"As to the case of infants, whereas you judge that they ought not to be baptized within two or three days after they are born; and that the rule of circumcision should be observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born; we were all, in our council, of the contrary opinion. It was our unanimous

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resolution and judgment, that the mercy and grace of God is to be denied to none that is born. For where- as our Lord in his Gospel says, "The Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them:" as far as lies in us, no soul, if possible, is to be lost. If the greatest offenders, and they that have sinned most grievously against God before, have afterwards, when they come to believe, forgiveness of their sins, and no person is kept off from baptism and grace; how much less reason is there to prohibit an infant, who, being newly born, has no other sin, save that being descended from Adam, according to the flesh, he has from his birth contracted the contagion of the death anciently threatened; who comes for that reason more easily to receive remis- sion of sins, because they are not his own, but other men's sins that are forgiven him?"

The testimony shews, that in the year 253 the prac- tice of Infant Baptism, without a dissentient voice, per-

"Quantum vero ad causam infantium pertinet, quos dixisti in- tra secundum vel tertium diem, quo nati sunt, constitutos baptizari non oportere: et considerandam esse legem circumcisionis antiquæ, ut intra octavum diem, eum qui natus est baptizandum et sanctifi- candum non putares, longè aliud in concilio nostro omnibus visum est. In hoc enim quod tu putabas esse faciendum nemo consen- sit: sed universi potius judicavimus nulli hominum nato misericor- diam Dei et gratiam denegandam. Nam cum Dominus in Evan- gelio suo dicat, Filius hominis non venit animas hominum perdere, sed salvare; quantum in nobis est, si fieri potest, nulla anima per- denda est.—Porro autem si etiam gravissimis delictoribus et in Deum multum antè peccantibus, cum postea crediderint, remissa peccatorum datur, et à baptismo atque à gratiâ nemo prohibetur: quanto magis prohiberi non debet infans, qui recens natus nihil peccavit, nisi quod secundum Adam carnaliter natus contagium mor- tis antiquæ primâ nativitate contraxit, qui ad remissam peccatorum accipiendam hoc ipso facilius accedit, quod illi remittuntur non propria sed aliena peccata."

Cypriani Epist. 59. Pamel. Edit.

& Here is a specimen of the boasted orthodoxy and purity of the early church. 'Baptism is essential to salvation, &c. Was there a dissentient voice to this doctrine? No! this Apostolical fact the souls of infants are saved by Baptism. This is the first plain record of infant Baptism on record'

vaded the whole African Church, and, we may add, the churches in Europe and Asia likewise; for such was the close communication kept up between these different branches of the church of Christ, in Cyprian's time, that a difference upon this point would have involved all Christendom in controversy. It shews us further, what they esteemed the grounds of Infant Baptism, namely, the doctrine of Original Sin; and, what is highly important to remark, that this practice was not connected, either in the views or state of those who maintained it, with any declension in vital piety, but flourished in a church which was blessed with a spiritual ministry, and adorned with the purity of genuine religion.

In regard to this decision of the African Bishops, our Baptist opponents agree with us in one point, that it affords a decisive evidence of the practice of Infant Baptism in the year 253. And this is a concession which deserves to be noted. Let Pædobaptists remember, that their opponents acknowledge the practice to have existed in the Church within 153 years of the days of the Apostle John. How came it to be introduced at that period, if it did not previously exist? How came the prelates of the Christian Church suddenly to depart in this important particular from the practice of their predecessors? How came the sixty-six prelates, who composed the African Council, to be unanimous in their sanction of this practice? Was there not one faithful man among them to protest against the innovation;—not one sufficiently acquainted with the history of the church during the brief period of its existence, to point out its inconsistency with the usage of former days? What! an assembly of sixty-six pastors, men of approved fidelity and gravity, who had stood the fiery trial of some of the severest persecutions ever known, who had tested their love to the Lord Jesus, in a

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most striking manner, and who seem not to have been wanting in any fundamental of godliness;—such an assembly adopt without a doubt, or question, or murmur, or even suspicion, a custom which was unsustained by precedent, and of such a nature as to supersede the ordinance which Christ had instituted! Impossible! It is beyond the limits of credibility. All that Baptist writers have said to make it appear that the practice was then, or recently, introduced, only tends by its weakness to shew more forcibly the impossibility of erasing the evidence of this usage from the annals of the primitive church.

VI. We appeal, in the next place, to the numerous and unequivocal proofs of the prevalence of this practice, contained in the writings of *Augustine*.

This celebrated man was born at Thagaste in Numidia, about the year 354. In early life he adopted the views of the Manichæans, but subsequently, under the preaching of Ambrose, was convinced of his error, and having applied himself with seriousness to the study of Christianity, was baptized in the year 387. Shortly afterwards he fixed his abode at Hippo in Africa, and was ordained by the Bishop of that See, whom he was first associated with, and subsequently succeeded, in the sacred office of the prolocution. He wrote much both before and after the rise of the Pelagian heresy, and though the controversy with Pelagius gave occasion for the more frequent mention of Infant Baptism, yet we find in all his writings the most ample testimony to its prevalence.

From his writings prior to that controversy we select the following:—

Lib. i. de Sermone Domini in Monte, C. 27.

Speaking upon the subject of divorce, he cites St. Paul's words, 1 Cor. vii. 14. "For an unbelieving husband has been sanctified by his believing wife, and an un-

believing wife by her believing husband," and then adds:

"I suppose it had then happened that several wives had been brought to the faith by their believing husbands; and husbands by their believing wives. And though he does not mention their names, yet he makes use of their example to confirm his advice. Then it follows, "else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." For there were then Christian infants that were sanctified, some by the authority of one of their parents, some by the consent of both; which would not be, if, as soon as one party believed, the marriage were dissolved, and the infidelity of the parties were not borne with, till there were an opportunity of believing."\*

To perceive the force of this passage, it is only necessary to be told that Augustine constantly in his other writings employs the term *sanctified* as equivalent to *baptized*. In this sense he obviously employs it here, and shews that he understands the Apostle to affirm, that an unbelieving husband or wife was often brought to believe and be baptized, through the influence of a believing partner, and to prove his assertion by referring to the established custom of baptizing the children of such parents.

Augustinus de libero arbitrio, lib. iii. C. 23.

"Men are wont to ask this question also, 'What good the Sacrament of Christ's Baptism does to infants; where-

\*"Sanctificatus est enim, inquit, vir infidelis in uxore fidei, et sanctificata est mulier infidelis in fratre fidei. Credo jam provenerat ut nonnullæ feminae per viros fideles, et viri per uxores fideles in fidem venirent. Et quamvis non dicens nomina, exemplis tamen exhortatus est ad confirmandum consilium suum. Deinde sequitur, 'Alioquin filii vestri immundi essent, nunc autem sancti sunt.' Jam enim erant parvuli Christiani, qui, sive a utroque uno ex parentibus, sive utroque consentiente, sanctificati erant: quod non foret, si uno credente dissociaretur conjugium, et non toleraretur infidelitas conjugum usque ad opportunitatem credendi."

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as after they have received it, they often die before they are able to understand any thing of it?' As to which matter it is piously and truly believed, that the faith of those by whom the child is offered to be consecrated profits the child. And this the most sound authority of the church doth commend, that hence every one may judge how profitable his own faith will be to himself, when even another person's faith is useful for the advantage of those that have as yet none of their own. For how could the widow's son be holpen by his own faith, whereof, being dead, he could have none? And yet his mother's faith was useful for his being raised to life again.\*

Augustinus de Baptismo contra Donatistas, lib. iv. C. 15.

"If any one do ask for divine authority in this matter: though that which the whole church practises, and which has not been instituted by councils, but was ever in use, is very reasonably believed to be no other than a thing delivered by authority of the Apostles: yet we may besides take a true estimate how much the Sacrament of Baptism does avail infants, by the circumcision which God's former people received. For Abraham was justified before he received that; as Cornelius was endued with the Holy Spirit before he was baptized: and yet the Apostle says of Abraham, that he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, by which he had in

\*: Quo loco etiam illud perscrutari homines solent, Sacramentum baptismi Christi quid parvulis prosit; cum eo accepto plerumque moriuntur, priusquam ex eo quidquam cognoscere potuerunt? Quâ in re satis pie rectèque creditur prodesse parvulo eorum fidem à quibus consecrandus offertur. Et hoc ecclesie commendat saluberrima autoritas, ut ex eo quisque sentiat quid sibi prosit fides sua, quando in aliorum quoque beneficium, qui propriam nondum habent, potest aliena commodari. Quid enim profuit filio viduæ fides sua, quam utique mortuus non habebat? Cui tamen profuit matris, ut resurgeret."



heart believed, and it had been counted to him for righteousness. Why then was he commanded thenceforward to circumcise all his male infants on the eighth day, (when they could not yet believe with the heart, that it might be counted to them for righteousness,) but for this reason,—because the sacrament itself is, of itself, of great import? Therefore in Abraham the righteousness of faith went before, and circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith, came after; so in Cornelius the spiritual sanctification of the gift of the Holy Spirit went before, and the sacrament of regeneration by the laver of baptism came after. And as in Isaac, who was circumcised the eighth day, the seal of the righteousness of faith went before, and (as he was a follower of his father's faith,) the righteousness itself, the seal whereof had gone before in his infancy, came after; so in infants baptized, the sacrament of regeneration goes before, and (if they put in practice the Christian religion) conversion of the heart, the mystery whereof went before in their body, comes after.”\*

\*“ Et si quisquam in hâc re divinam auctoritatem querat: quam quod universa tenet ecclesia, nec conciliis institutum, sed semper retentum est, non nisi auctoritate apostolicâ traditum rectissimè creditur: tamen veraciter conijcere possumus quid valeat in parvulis baptismi sacramentum ex circumcisione carnis quam prior populus acceperit. Quam priûsqum acciperet justificatus est Abraham, sicut Cornelius etiam dono Spiritûs Sancti priûsqum baptizaretur datus est: dicit tamen Apostolus de ipso Abraham, Signum recepit circumcisionis, signaculum fidei justitiæ quâ jam corde crediderat, et deputatum ei erat ad justitiam. Cur ergo ei præceptum est ut omnem deinceps infantem masculum octavo die circumcideret, qui nondum poterat corde credere ut ei deputaretur ad justitiam, nisi quia et ipsum per seipsum sacramentum multum valebat? Sicut ergo in Abraham præcessit fidei justitiâ, et accessit circumcisio signaculum justitiæ fidei: ita in Cornelio præcessit sanctificatio spiritalis in dono Spiritûs Sancti, et accessit sacramentum regenerationis in lavacro baptismi. Et sicut in Isaac, qui octavo sue natiuitatis die circumcisus est, præcessit signaculum justitiæ fidei, et (quoniam patris fidem imitatus est) secuta est in crescente ipsa

## De Genesi ad literam, lib. 10.

"The custom of our mother the church in baptizing infants must not be disregarded, nor be accounted needless, nor believed to be other than a tradition of the Apostles."\*

From the writings of Augustine after the rise of the Pelagian heresy.

## Lib. iii. contra duas Epist. Pelagian. C. 10.

"Original sin is so plain by the Scriptures, and that it is forgiven to infants in the laver of regeneration is so confirmed by the antiquity and authority of the Catholic faith, and so notoriously the practice of the Church, that whatsoever is disputed, inquired, or affirmed of the origin of the soul, if it be contrary to this, cannot be true.†

## Lib. i. Of the guilt and forgiveness of sins, &amp;c.

"If they (Infants) are not diseased with any sickness of original sin, why are they carried to Christ the Physician to receive the sacrament of their eternal salvation, by the godly fear of their friends that run with them to it? Why is it not said to them in the church, Carry back from hence these innocent creatures: the whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners? So odd a thing

justitia ejus signaculum in infante precesserat; ita et in baptizatis infantibus precessit regenerationis sacramentum, et (si Christianam tenuerint pietatem) sequitur in corde conversio, ejus mysterium precessit in corpore."

\* "Consuetudo tamen matris ecclesie in baptizandis parvulis nequâquam spernenda est, neque ullo modo superflua deputanda, nec omnino cedenda nisi Apostolica esse traditio."

† "Sed hoc dico, tam manifestum esse secundum Scripturas sanctas originale peccatum, atque hoc dimitti lavacro regenerationis in parvulis tantâ fidei Catholicæ antiquitate atque autoritate firmatum, tam clarâ Ecclesiæ celebritate notissimum, ut quicquid de animæ origine exagitet inquisitionem vel affirmatione disseritur, si contra hoc sit, verum esse non possit."

never was said, never is said, nor ever will be said in the church of Christ.\*

Lib. iii. of the guilt and forgiveness of sins, &c.

When proving that the whole church had of old constantly held that infants obtain remission of sins by baptism, he says,

"I do not remember that I ever heard any other thing from any Christians that received the Old and New Testament: neither from such as were of the Catholic Church, nor from such as belong to any sect or schism. I do not remember that I ever read otherwise in any writer that I could ever find treating of these matters, that followed the canonical Scriptures, or did mean, or did pretend to do so."†

These passages shew, 1st. That Augustine regarded the text of St. Paul. 1 Cor. vii. 14, as referring to Infant Baptism. 2dly, That he clearly perceived and traced the analogy between circumcision and baptism. 3dly, That Infant Baptism was, in his days, the universal practice of the Christian Church, and believed to have been handed down from the Apostles themselves;—and 4thly, That he though a man of immense learning, and full acquaintance

\* *Si nullâ originalis peccati ægritudine sauciati sunt, quomodo ad medicum, Christum, hoc est, ad percipiendum sacramentum salutis æternæ, suorum currentium pio timore portantur, et non eis in Ecclesiâ dicitur, Auferte hinc innocentes istos, non est opus sanis medicus, sed male habentibus: non venit Christus vocare justos sed peccatores. Nunquam dictum est, nunquam dicitur nunquam omnino dicitur in Ecclesiâ Christi tale commentum."*

† *"Non memini me aliud audivisse à Christianis, qui utrumque accipiunt testamentum, non solum in Catholicâ Ecclesiâ, verum etiam in quâlibet heresi vel schismate constitutis; non memini me aliud legisse apud eos quos de his rebus aliquid scribentes legere potui, qui scripturas canonicas sequerentur, vel sequi se crederent, credere voluissent."*

with the past history of the Christian Church, (for he shortly afterwards published an account of all the different sects and opinions that had yet been known in Christendom;) had never heard of any, whether Catholics or Sectarians, who denied that infants were to be baptized for the forgiveness of Original sin. Is it credible that such a man, living within 300 years of the Apostles, should be mistaken upon this point? What should we say of a learned divine in these days, who was ignorant of the fact whether the Reformed churches, at the time of the Reformation, sanctioned Infant Baptism or not?

VII. We cite, in the last place, *Pelagius*, because he of all men was most interested to deny the antiquity and authority of Infant Baptism, if it had been in his power to do so.

Pelagius was a native of Britain, and born in the fourth century. He was a man of great talents and learning, and, by the confession of his opponents themselves, unimpeachable morals. In the year 404, when resident at Rome, he broached his heretical sentiments upon the subject of Original sin, shewing that he rejected this doctrine. He afterwards retired to Africa, and from thence to Palestine, where Jerome wrote against his opinions. Augustine subsequently employed his powerful pen against him, and used, as we have already seen, the argument drawn from Infant Baptism to disprove his tenets. When condemned by the African Church, he appealed by letter to Innocent, Bishop of Rome, and subsequently, in person, to Zosimus his successor. From his letter, and the confession of faith accompanying it, we quote the following extracts:

From his Confession of Faith—

“We hold one Baptism, which we say ought to be ad-

ministered with the same sacramental words to infants, as it is to elder persons.\*

In his letter he says—

“That men slandered him as if he denied the sacrament of baptism to infants, and did promise the kingdom of heaven to any persons without the redemption of Christ: that he never heard, no, not even any impious heretic, or sectary, who would say that which he had mentioned of infants. For who is there so ignorant of that which is read in the Gospel, as (I need not say to affirm this, but) in any heedless way to say such a thing, or even to have such a thought? In a word, who can be so impious, as to hinder infants from being baptized and born again in Christ, and so make them miss of the kingdom of Heaven? None can enter into the kingdom of Heaven, that is not born again of water and the Holy Spirit. Who is there so impious, as to refuse to an infant, of what age soever, the common redemption of mankind?”†

Here we have the testimony of a man of learning, who was born in Britain, lived at Rome, travelled in Africa, settled in Palestine; a man engaged for years in a vehement controversy upon the subject of Original Sin, in which the practice of Infant Baptism was triumphantly

\*“Baptisma unum tenemus, quod lisdem sacramenti verbis in infantibus, quibus etiam in majoribus, asserimus esse celebrandum.”

†“Se ab hominibus infamari quòd neget parvulis baptismi sacramentum, et absque redemptione Christi aliquibus regna cœlorum promittat. Nunquam se vel impium aliquem hæreticum audisse, qui hoc quod proposuit de parvulis diceret. Quis enim ita evangelicæ lectionis ignarus est, qui hoc non modo affirmare conetur, sed qui vel leviter dicere aut etiam sentire possit? Denique quis tam impius, qui parvulos exortes regni cœlorum esse velit, dum eos baptizari et in Christo renasci vetat? Nisi renatus ex aquâ et Spiritu Sancto, regnum cœlorum nullus possit intrare. Quis illo tam impius est, qui cujuslibet ætatis parvulo interdicat communem humani generis redemptionem?”

urged against him by his opponents, and who so felt the force of the argument, as to use every art and ingenuity to extricate himself from the difficulty in which it placed him. How easy for him to have cut to pieces their favourite argument by one short sentence containing a denial of Infant Baptism! Could he have pleaded that Infant Baptism was an innovation; could he have urged that it was not the practice of the primitive church; could he have shewn the time of its introduction and the opposition that was raised against it; could he have pointed out in any part of Christendom a society of Antipædobaptists, who retained an opposite practice, and pleaded antiquity for their support, what a triumph would it have afforded him! Does he then do so? No;—precisely the reverse. He frankly bears his testimony to the prevalence of this custom, to his own assent to the propriety of it, and confesses that he had never heard of any, even an impious heretic, who had ventured to deny it. Let the candid mind pause over this declaration in addition to those which have been previously quoted. Let the sincere inquirer after truth, consider the chain of evidences that has now been placed before him, and we are persuaded he must feel the conviction that Infant Baptism prevailed, in the first four centuries, universally through the Christian Church.

It is plain from the evidence advanced, that in the middle of the fourth century, i. e. about 250 years from St. John's day, it pervaded every church in Christendom; the most learned men who were then living esteemed it an Apostolic practice, and had never heard of one who denied that it was so. It is equally plain, that in the middle of the third century, or about 150 years from St. John's time, it pervaded all the churches of Africa, and that sixty-six of her Prelates, with the eminent Cyprian at

their head, regarded it as no innovation. It is evident from the writings of Tertullian, that it prevailed sixty or seventy years before this, that is, within about eighty years of the Apostle John, and that Irenæus and Justin, men born before the death of the Apostle, made use of language in regard to young children and infants, which shews the prevalence of the practice in their own day, and prior to the expiration of the first century.\* With these evidences before us, we need to be at no loss to understand why St. Paul addresses children as "holy", and as members of the Christian church; or what our Lord intended, when he commissioned his Apostles to go forth and baptize all nations in the name of the blessed Trinity.

\*It is remarkable, that even from the southern confines of Asia we have evidence of the primitive authority of this practice. The Syrian Christians, visited by Buchanan, who inhabit the interior of Travancore and Malabar, and who have been settled there from the early ages of Christianity, retain among their primitive customs the usage of Infant Baptism. The antiquity of these churches cannot be questioned. There is good reason to think that the Apostle St. Thomas planted the Gospel in that country, and the only church with which they appear in subsequent ages to have had communication, was the church of Antioch. Rome indeed after the fifteenth century extended her influence over those on the sea coast, but the churches in the interior refused to yield to her domination, hid their books, fled to their mountains, and retained in simplicity and purity the primitive rites of Christianity. They, like the witnesses to whom we have just appealed, appear never to have heard of such sects as Baptists or Quakers, until Buchanan disclosed to them that such people were to be found in the West.

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## CHAPTER VI.

ON THE OBJECTIONS OF BAPTISTS IN REGARD TO THE COMMISSION OF THE APOSTLES—THE LANGUAGE OF JESUS IN REFERENCE TO LITTLE CHILDREN — AND ST. PETER'S DECLARATION CONCERNING THEM AT PENTECOST.

I. THREE objections are made to our views of the commission of the Apostles.

1. It is said, the previous practice of the Apostles would lead them to think that only adults were to be baptized.\*

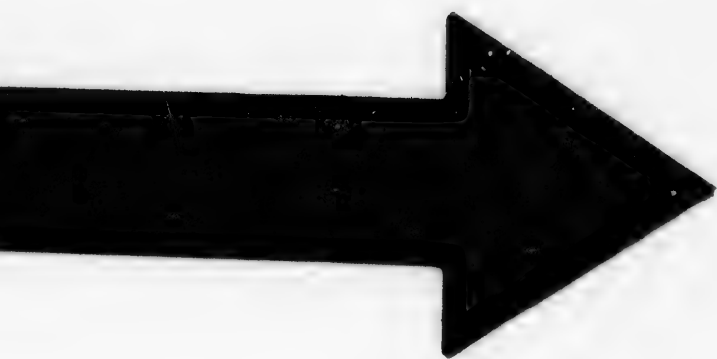
We have already shewn, that their previous practice in this respect, and that of John, cannot be ascertained, and that if it could be, no argument could be drawn from it in regard to Christian Baptism.† We freely admit, however, the power that previous custom would have upon

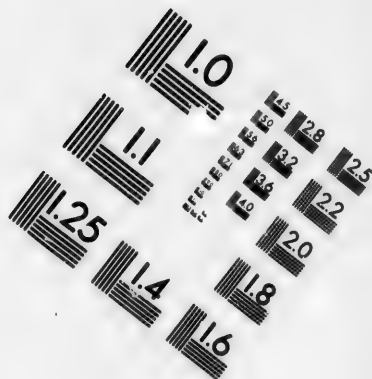
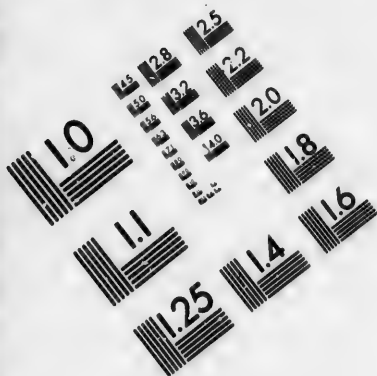
\*Mr. C.'s Pamphlet, p. 10,

†Chap. II.

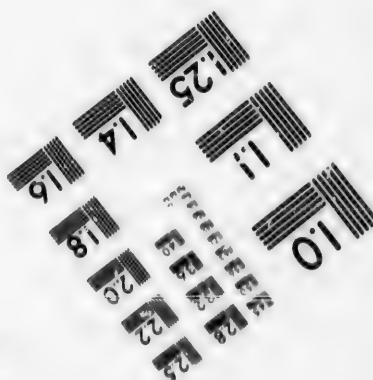
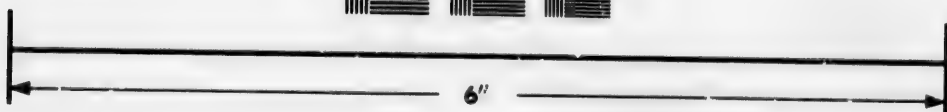
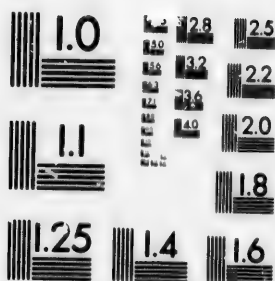








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their minds, and this very circumstance convinces us that they would understand their commission as extending to infants, no less than adults. Their nation had been for ages accustomed to make proselytes from among the Gentiles.\* They had the Divine sanction for doing so, and for admitting such proselytes to the covenant of God by circumcision. But when this was the case, they admitted the infants as well as their parents. The Divine Law had taught them that this was the proper mode of procedure, and thus prepared them to understand in the same latitude their commission to baptize.

Again, we remark that they had been accustomed to the practice of *baptizing* proselytes.† The fact has been

\*“ According to some, there were in Israel, in the time of Solomon, 153,600 of these proselytes.”—*Robinson's Theol. Dict. Art. Proselyte.*

†Upon the subject of proselyte baptism, we refer our readers to the following authorities.

*Dr. Rees.* “ We find it to have been the custom of the Jews, solemnly to baptize, as well as to circumcise, all their proselytes. As their writers treat largely of the reasons for this rite, and give no hint of its being a novel institution, it is probable, that this had always been the custom antecedent to the time of Moses, whose account of the rite of circumcision, and of the manner of performing it, is by no means circumstantial. The Jewish writers, without one dissenting voice, allow the fact, that the practice of Jewish baptism obtained *before* and *at*, as well as *after*, our Saviour's time. There is also a strong intimation, even in the Gospel itself, of such a known practice among the Jews in the time of John the Baptist, John i. 25. The testimonies of the Jewish writers are of the greater weight, because the practice, reported by them to have been of so ancient a date, did still remain among them; for if it had not been of that antiquity to which it pretends, viz., before the time of Christ, it is not likely that it would ever have become a custom among the Jews afterwards. Would they begin to proselyte persons to their religion by baptism, in imitation of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they held accursed? And yet, if this proselyte baptism were adopted by the Jews since the time of Christ, it must have been a mere innova-

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sometimes doubted, but surely without reason. The prac-  
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tion in imitation of Christians, which is not very likely.--*Dr. Rees'*  
*New Cyclopædia, Art. Baptism.*

*Maimonides.* "In all ages whensoever any Gentile was wil-  
ling to enter into the covenant, and be gathered under the wings  
of the Shechinah, and to undertake the yoke of the law, he was  
bound to have circumcision and baptism, and a peace offering; and  
if it were a woman, baptism and sacrifice. Baptism was in the  
desert before the giving of the law. If an Israelite take a *Gentile*  
*child, or find a Gentile infant, and baptize him in the name*  
*of a proselyte, behold, he is a proselyte.*"--*Isuri B. C. 13,*  
*and Halach Aibdim. C. 8.*

*Talmud of Babylon.* "Any male child of a proselyte, un-  
der the age of thirteen years and a day, and any female, under the  
age of twelve years and a day, was baptized as an infant, at the re-  
quest and by the assent of the father, or the authority of the coun-  
cil." *Seldene jure Nat. et Gent. juxta Hebræos, L. II, C. 2.*

*Calmet.* "The Jews require three things in a complete prose-  
lyte, baptism, circumcision, and sacrifice: but for women, only  
baptism and sacrifice. Baptism was never repeated, neither in the  
person of the parent proselyte, nor in that of his children;"--*Dic-*  
*tionary of the Bible, art. Proselyte.*

*American Encyclopædia.* "It was the practice in the Jew-  
ish Church, long before Christ's time, to baptize proselytes, as a  
part of the ceremony of their admission"--*Art. Baptism.*

*Jahn.* "Proselytes are united with the great body of the  
Jewish people, not only by circumcision but by baptism also. The  
Jews assert, that the baptism of proselytes, which has now been  
spoken of, is mentioned in Exod. xix. 10, 14, & xxiv. 8."--*Bib-*  
*lical Archaeology, Sect. 325.*

*Henry.* "They readily apprehended baptism to be fitly used  
as a sacred rite or ceremony, for the Jewish Church had always  
used it with circumcision in the admission of proselytes, to signify  
the cleansing of them from the pollutions of their former state.  
That sign was made use of in the Christian church, that it might  
be the more passible. They expected that it would be used in  
the days of Messiah, because it was promised that then there  
should be a fountain opened, [Zech. xiii. 1,] and clean water  
sprinkled. [Ezek. xxxvi. 25.]" *Comment. on John i. 25.*

*Scott.* "It became customary in the Jewish church, to bap-  
tize those who were proselyted to their religion from the Gentiles,  
both male and female, as well as to circumcise the males: this de-

second century, and their most distinguished writers affirm that it had done so ages before, from the very time of their

noted, that they deemed them unclean in themselves, and not meet to join the congregation of the Lord, till they were washed from the filthiness of their Gentile state. The prophets, also, often alluded to this emblem of the soul's being cleansed from sin." *Comment on Matt. iii. 6.*

*Dr. Adam Clarke.* "The Apostles knew well, that the Jews not only circumcised the children of proselytes, but also baptized them. The children and even infants of proselytes were baptized among the Jews. They were in consequence reputed clean, and partakers of the blessing of the covenant." *Comment, on Matt. xxviii. 19.*

*John Brown.* "If males, they were circumcised and then baptized, and then presented their oblation to the Lord. Their females were baptized and then they offered their oblation. No boys under thirteen years of age, or girls under twelve, were admitted without the consent of their parents, or, if these refused, without the consent of the place."—*Dictionary of the Bible, Art. Proselytes.*

*Dr. Wm. Brown.* "If the head of a family was baptized, the infants were baptized at the same time. It was a matter of course in the baptism of houses. The females were received by baptism and sacrifice." *Antiquities of the Jews, Vol. I. pages 629, 630.*

*Witsius.* "When a Gentile became a proselyte of righteousness, three ceremonies were used,—circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice. But we are specially to observe, that even little children were baptized, generally at the same time with their parents. For thus it is said in Talmud Babylon; *They baptize the little young proselyte.* They make the first practice of this baptism to be very ancient. Some ascribe it to the patriarch Jacob, when he received into his family and domestic church, the Shechemite young women, and other gentiles who resided with him. Others derive the first testimony, or practice, of this baptism, from what is said to Moses, Exodus. xix. 10; "Go unto the people and sanctify them," &c. *Economy of the Covenants, Vol. III. pages 384, 385, 386.*

*Prideaux.* "The Jews are remarked, in our Saviour's time, to have been very sedulous to convert to their religion; and when any were thus proselyted, they were initiated by baptism, sacrifice, and circumcision." *Connexion of the Old and New Testament, Vol. III. page 411.*

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receiving the law at Sinai. But how did they baptize these proselytes? They applied the rite to parents and children, adults and infants, without distinction. In the same extent, no doubt, they would now fulfil their commission to baptize all nations, unless their Divine Master had given them some express prohibition, which we nowhere find that he did. We conclude, therefore, that previous custom would naturally lead them to baptize the infants with their parents.

2. A second objection is drawn from the order of the words in the commission. "The Apostles, it is said, were first to teach, then to baptize, and it is absurd to apply this word "teach" to infants."

This objection has been a hundred times repeated, and as

Robinson. "According to the Rabbins, these proselytes, by means of circumcision, baptism, and an offering, obtained the rights and privileges of Jewish citizenship," *Greek and English Lexicon*.

Dr. Doddridge. "When proselytes came over to the Jewish religion, the children were baptized with the parents."—*Lectures, Proposition CLIV. Sect. 1.*

Lightfoot. "You see baptism inseparably joined to the circumcision of proselytes. They baptized also young children with their parents." *Horæ Hebraicæ, on Matt. iii. 28.*

Wilson, Bagwell, and Symson. "A proselyte was made by the observation of three ceremonies, if a male, namely, circumcision, washing, and oblation; but if a female, then by two, washing and oblation." *Dictionary of the Bible, Art, Proselyte.*

Stackhouse. "The custom of the Jews in all ages, has been to receive their heathen proselytes by baptism, as well as by sacrifice and circumcision."—*History of the Bible, Vol. V. page 286.*

Dr. Wall. "Whenever Gentiles were proselyted to the Jewish religion, they were initiated by circumcision, the offering of sacrifice, and baptism. They were all baptized, males and females, adults and infants. This was their constant practice from the time of Moses to that of our Saviour, and from that period to the present day." *Hist. Infant Baptism, Introduction, Vol: I.*

\*Mr. C's pamphlet, p. 11.



often refuted. It is one of those objections which sounds plausibly, and no doubt has deceived many, but a little examination shews it to be destitute of any solid foundation.

Let our readers bear in mind that the word "teach" in the beginning of the commission is not the same word that is rendered by the term "teach" in the latter part of it. The words of our Lord are "Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them and teaching them." The very structure of the sentence, marks emphatically this distinction.\* Jesus does not say, "Godisciple, baptize and teach," but "go, disciple;" How? "Baptizing and teaching;" the two latter terms being comprehended under the first, which is more general, and thus, if the mere order of the words were to be consulted, precisely reversing the system for which Baptists so strenuously contend.

\* *Μαθητεύσατε*. Itaque hic amplius aliquid quam *το docere* innuitur, quemadmodum etiam v. 20, *διδασκειν αυτας*, ab illo *μαθητευσειν* distinguitur, tanquam species à genere. Scilicet *το μαθητευσειν*, seu *instituere* et *facere discipulos*, ut generale comprehendit duo officia et media specialia hac pertinentia, nempe *το βαπτισειν* et *το διδασκειν*, quorum illud ad parvulos et infantes, hoc ad adultiores magis accommodatum est." Wolfii curæ philologice, tom. I, p. 423.

*Μαθητεύσατε*. That is, *Make disciples*; bring them in by baptism that they may be taught. They are very much out, who from these words cry down infant baptism, and assert that it is necessary for those that are to be baptized to be taught before they are baptized. I. Observe the words here, *μαθητεύσατε*, *make disciples*, and then after, *διδασκοντες*, *teaching*, in the 20th verse. II. Among the Jews, and also with us and in all nations, those are made disciples that they may be taught. A certain heathen came to the great Hillel, and said, *Make me a proselyte, that thou mayst teach me*. He was first to be proselyted, and then to be taught. Thus first make them disciples, (*μαθητεύσατε*) by baptism, and then teach them to observe all things, (*διδασκετε αυτους τησιν παντα*.)" Lightfoot, vol. 2. p. 273.

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But, say our opponents, "a disciple means a learner, from the Latin, *disco*, to learn."\* This criticism however can be of little benefit to their cause. For if we were to admit that the derivation of this term ought to determine the meaning of it here, what would the words of our Lord amount to? Simply to this—"Go, make all nations learners, baptizing them and teaching them my commands;" which would in fact be equivalent to saying, "Go, initiate them into my church, baptizing them and instructing them." The truth however is, that the mere derivation of a term cannot determine its meaning, which is always liable to be modified by use. Suppose we should reason thus;—the English word *villain* is derived from the latin *villanus*, which signifies a farmer, therefore every villain must be a farmer; or again the English term *humble*, is derived from the latin word *humilis*, which signifies mean, low, abject; therefore a humble person, in the language of Scripture, must signify a mean or abject one; or again the English term *virtue* is derived from the latin *virtus*, which strictly signifies boldness, fortitude, valour; therefore "a virtuous woman" in Scripture, must mean a bold or valorous one: what would our Baptist opponents think of our critical powers?

"It requires indeed," says Dr. Campbell, "but a very small skill in language, to enable us to discover that etymology is often a very unsafe guide to the proper acceptance of a term. The sense of words is often totally different from that to which the etymology points. In process of time, words, in every tongue, vary from their original import, in consequence of the gradual influence of incidental causes, and the change in manners and sentiments which they occasion." Such has been the

\*See Mr. C's pamphlet, p. 35.  
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case with the term "disciple." Looking back to the derivation of the term, whether in English or Greek, we discover a reference to teaching; but looking to its signification, as determined by general use in our Saviour's day, we do not find that it is limited to this meaning. It was not always applied to those who were actually undergoing the process of instruction, but to persons, whether adults or infants, who were dedicated to Christ for the purposes of his religion. It was used, in fact, precisely as the term to "proselyte" was among the Jews, which we know was applied by them to infants as well as adults. Hence Doddridge renders the words of the commission, "Go forth therefore, and proselyte all the nations of the earth."\* Valpy remarks upon them—"The Apostles are commissioned and empowered to go and make proselytes or disciples."† Wall says—"To disciple the nations to Christ, is the same thing as to proselyte them, and in the Hebrew text of St. Matthew, the term would in all probability be the identical term which the Jews employed to express this idea."‡

These remarks upon the meaning of the term "disciple," we believe are strictly just, and proofs to the same effect might easily be multiplied, but they would be superfluous; for even if the sense which Baptists attach to it were true, of what avail would it be to them? Who that is at all acquainted with Scripture could suppose for a moment, that the mere order of the words in the commission, could furnish a sufficient ground for the rejection of Infant Baptism? We may here put it to the candour of our opponents, and ask, are you willing that your own tenets should be tried by this rule? Do you believe,

\*Family Expositor. †See Valpy's Note on Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.  
‡See Introduction to History of Baptism, § 5.

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for example, that the baptism of the Spirit never pre-  
 cedes the baptism of water? Upon your own principles  
 you must, for our Lord says, "Except a man be born of  
 water and of the Spirit,"—Mark the order, first "born of  
 water," then "of the Spirit." According to your system  
 of interpretation, the regeneration of the heart must al-  
 ways follow, never precede, the baptism of water. Do  
 you believe this? The fact is, you believe precisely the  
 reverse: you think a person is not a proper recipient of  
 water-baptism, until his heart is regenerated. Here then  
 you deal unfairly with the word of God. You assume, in  
 reference to particular passages, principles of interpreta-  
 tion, which cut to pieces other parts of your system.

3. The last objection Baptists raise to our interpreta-  
 tion of the commission is, that the same principle would  
 render it obligatory upon us to baptize every individual  
 of whom those nations are composed, without regard to  
 "feelings, motives," character, or any other considera-  
 tion. We reply in the words of our opponents, that "a  
 law of Christ may be as well set forth by example, as by  
 precept."\* Now the example of the Apostles teaches us,  
 that, in the case of adults, we ought to demand a credible  
 profession of faith. And this demand necessarily ex-  
 cludes those adults, who cannot afford us this evidence of  
 their title to this ordinance. But an exception confirms  
 the rule, in cases where no exception is made, which is  
 precisely the case of infants. Neither Jesus, nor his Apos-  
 tles have told us to demand this profession of faith from  
 infants; they have not done so verbally, or by their exam-  
 ple; but on the contrary taught us by a variety of ways,  
 which to our minds are perfectly satisfactory, that they  
 ought to be admitted to baptism without it. We do not,  
 therefore, in executing our commission to baptize, pre-

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, page 85.

sume to make exceptions, where Christ has not made them, or to exclude those whom he has not excluded.

II. The language of Jesus in reference to little children; Mark x. 13—16.

Pædobaptists justly regard this passage, as containing a direction to bring infants to Christ for his spiritual blessing, which, now that he is personally removed from the earth, they feel that they can most appropriately do, by presenting them to him in the solemn ordinance of baptism. And their convictions upon this point are strengthened by observing the reason assigned by our Lord for bringing them to him for his blessing; “for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” If they are entitled to be members of his church or kingdom, they are to be formally acknowledged as such, by the ordinance of baptism. To this our opponents object—

First—That “Jesus did not direct these infants to be baptized, which he would have done, if it had been necessary.”\* Strange reasoning this! Would our Lord direct them to be baptized, before his baptism was instituted? Would it have been consistent to direct them to be formally acknowledged members of his kingdom, before that kingdom had really commenced, while circumcision was still in force, by which they had been regularly initiated into the church of God? Surely not. A moment’s reflection must convince us, that such a direction at that period would have been premature, and, we may add, superfluous likewise; for if Jesus thus decided, as we see he did, that they were entitled to membership in his church, his Apostles would certainly never hesitate after the institution of his baptism, to acknowledge their title by admitting them to that sacred ordinance. It was sufficiently soon for infants to be baptized, when Jesus had said, “Go,

\*Mr. C’s Pamphlet, page 39.

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disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and from that time forward, we are thoroughly persuaded, they have been always admitted to that ordinance by the church of God.

Secondly—Our opponents object that the term, *such*, which our Lord here employs, does not mean *such in age*, but merely *such in disposition*,—humble persons. Let us calmly examine their reasons for this conclusion.

1st. They say, that to suppose our Lord to speak of infants in point of age, would imply that the kingdom of heaven was entirely or "principally composed of little infants.\*" We deny this inference. Whatever proportion they may bear to the other members of Christ's church, and we do not doubt that the proportion is great, we maintain that the words "of such is the kingdom of heaven," do not mean that they alone compose the kingdom, but that *the privileges of it belong to them*. They mean that the kingdom of heaven "is theirs;" that they are *sharers in its blessings*. Let our readers turn to Matthew v. 10, where our Lord says of the persecuted, "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The words in the original are, "of such is the kingdom of heaven;" precisely the same words that are here applied to infants. But can we suppose that our Lord meant to say that the persecuted alone compose that kingdom? Then indeed infants who die without persecution are excluded; then the favoured disciples who have lived surrounded by the pious, and have been freed from opposition, are excluded; then they who live under the millennial reign of Jesus will be excluded; then the angels themselves are excluded, for they, we presume, are exempted from the troubles of persecution, How absurd are these conclusions! Yet they result inev-

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet page 36.

itably from the interpretaion which Baptists affix to the words, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." Surely, then, this interpretation must be wrong, and the objection they have built upon it must be utterly without foundation.

2. A further reason is urged for interpreting this expression to mean such *in disposition*, rather than such *in age*. "The context," it is said, "requires it." Our Lord says at verse 15, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Here, it is urged, our Lord speaks of those who are humble in disposition; and this is to be considered as explanatory of the words, "of such is the kingdom of heaven."\* We reject the criticism. Our Lord's words at v. 15, are a distinct reflection, grounded upon the whole transaction which the disciples and other spectators had just witnessed. They are not to be considered as explanatory of the words, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." The purport of our Lord's observations appears to be this;—"You greatly err in thinking that infants are not to be brought to me; suffer them to come, and forbid them not, for they are entitled to the privileges of my church; nay further, I solemnly assure you that, so far from their being excluded, no man, who is not first brought to resemble them, shall enter my kingdom." Among other reasons for taking this view of the case, we assign the following;—

In the first place, the use and application of the word "such," as employed in Scripture, teaches us that our Lord's words "of such is the kingdom of heaven," must at least include the children who are there alluded to. When for example we meet the expressions "such power,"† "such parables,"‡ "such things,"§ "such mira-

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 37.

†Mat. ix. 8. ‡Mark iv. 33.

§Luke ix. 9. xiii. 2.

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cles,"\* "such mighty works,"† it is not merely similar  
power, or similar parables, or similar things, miracles, or  
mighty works that are meant; but the very power, para-  
bles, miracles, &c. that had just been witnessed. This,  
we affirm, is the manner in which the original word,  
translated "such" in these passages is constantly used;  
and this in itself should be sufficient to decide the ques-  
tion at issue.

But we further remark, that the very object of our  
Lord's declaration, renders it plain that he speaks of chil-  
dren in *age*. Why does he say "of such is the kingdom  
of heaven"? Is he not giving a reason why they should  
suffer little children to come to him? But what kind of  
reasoning would it be to say, "Suffer infants to come to  
me, for humble persons are members of my kingdom?"  
Surely it did not follow, that infants ought to be brought  
to him for his blessing, and that the disciples were cul-  
pable in not knowing it, because humble-minded men  
were to enter his kingdom. But if you understand our  
Lord to say,—Suffer little children to be brought to me  
for my blessing; do not presume to forbid their approach;  
for these little infants, and such as these, are members of  
my kingdom; then all is plain; this is indeed a reason why  
the disciples should suffer them to be brought to their di-  
vine Master; this declaration is consistent with the object  
our Lord had in view, and would effectually teach the  
disciples, as it ought to teach us, to bring those little in-  
fants to Jesus for his blessing, who are as yet unable to  
know the value of this exalted privilege.

"Suffer" says our Blessed Redeemer, "little children to  
come unto me;" he speaks not of those particular chil-  
dren only who were then before him; but of little children

\*John ix. 16. †Mark vi. 2.



generally. And how, I would ask, are they to come to him? How are our infants, ere they are capable of exercising faith or repentance, to come to Jesus? They cannot come to his person, for that is in heaven; but they can come to his ordinance, and there be solemnly dedicated to him, and receive his blessing. There is something so reasonable in this, so congenial to the feelings of a pious parent's heart, so consistent with the acknowledged dealings of God under the Jewish economy, so perfectly in harmony with the more enlarged and diffusive benevolence of the Christian dispensation, that it is really wonderful a question should ever have been raised upon the subject. And why should we withhold our offspring from this privilege?—"Unless (says Bishop Taylor) infants are incapable of the essentials of baptism, no reason can be assigned why they should not be admitted to it. Our Saviour's treatment of, and conduct towards, the children who were brought to him prove that they were incapable of none of its essentials, therefore no good reason can be assigned why they should not be admitted to it. If they are excluded on any just ground, it must be on account of the outward ministry, or the inward grace, or incapacity in themselves, or the absence of a precept. They are not excluded on account of the outward ministry, for Christ himself took them in his arms; or the inward grace, for he blessed them; or incapacity in themselves, for of such is the kingdom of heaven; nor through want of precept, for he said, suffer little children to come unto me. Unless, therefore, they who came to Christ on earth cannot come to him in glory; unless they, who received a blessing from the hands of the Saviour, cannot now from the hands of his servants; unless baptismal water be more than baptismal grace, and to be admitted to the church be more than to be admitted to

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### III. St. Peter's language at Pentecost, Acts ii. 39.

The whole question, as it regards this passage, turns upon the meaning of the term *children*. In what latitude are we to understand it?

Our Baptist opponents say, that it can only refer to the adult offspring of the persons addressed. We think, on the other hand, that it includes their descendants generally, whether infants, children, youths or adults.

Why ought we to think that the term *children* in this passage only means adult children? The reason which baptists give is that, in the prophecy of Joel to which St. Peter refers, it is said, "Your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions." But as infants cannot "prophesy" or "see visions," they infer that they cannot be partakers of the promise to which the Apostle refers as the warrant for the reception of baptism.\*

But mark now the strong objections to this argument.

1. It limits the promise, which St. Peter makes the warrant for receiving baptism, to the miraculous influences of the Spirit. The Apostle says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you."—Why? "For the promise is unto you and to your children"—What *promise*? Does he mean the promise of miraculous powers only;—that their sons and daughters, should see visions and prophecy? Surely the three thousand converts, baptized on that memorable day, were not all endowed with miraculous powers; surely all the descendants of that people to whom this promise extended were not thus gifted. Can we then limit the promise to these powers? Is it not obvious that it must be understood in a more extended sense? But if you extend it further, the argument taken

\* Mr. C's pamphlet p. 41.

from the words of Joel must utterly fail, for it proceeds upon the idea that *prophesying* and *seeing visions* must always attend the fulfilment of this promise, and consequently that infants can have nothing to do with it.

2. The truth is, that it was not because Joel made use of the words "sons and daughters," that St. Peter says, "the promise is unto your children;" but because the promise of the Spirit, which was to receive its accomplishment under the gospel, was included in that gracious covenant which God had made, so many ages before, "with Abraham and his seed forever." Read attentively Genesis xvii. 7. where God promises to be "a God to Abraham and his seed after him." Read next Deut. xxix. 10—15. Mark particularly the 15th and 29th verses of this chapter, in the latter of which you meet the words, "those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever." Read next Galatians iii. 13, 14, where St. Paul calls "the promise of the Spirit," "the blessing of Abraham, which was to come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." The careful perusal of these passages may convince us, that St. Peter had further reasons, than those afforded by the mere language of Joel, for telling his countrymen that the gracious promise of the Spirit extended to their children as well as to themselves, and that all the meaning of this term is to be ascertained, rather by a reference to the general promise made to Abraham and his seed, which we know embraced infants as well as adults, than by any particular expressions employed by the Prophet Joel.

3. How, we may ask, were the persons interested in these transactions at Pentecost, likely to understand this language? The Apostles who employed it, and the multitudes who listened to them, were Jews;—either native Jews, or proselytes to their religion. They had been ac-

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customed to see their infants admitted to the privileges of God's covenant;—the one had seen them circumcised at eight days old, the other had seen them both baptized and circumcised. How then, were they likely to understand the Apostle's language? Were they likely to understand him in the most obvious sense of the term, that which most accorded with the customs they were familiar with; or in the less obvious sense of it, and one which did not accord with those customs? We must see at once, that they who were Jews by descent, or Jews by conversion, were equally prepared to understand the Apostles in the sense that Pædobaptists affix to the term, and that the Apostles were equally prepared to know that they would do so. It has been justly said, that "a man accustomed to satisfy himself with the obvious and natural meaning of a sentence does not easily shake off his habit." These persons were very unlikely to do so on this occasion. They were men of plain understanding, and unsophisticated minds;—they were therefore likely to interpret the Apostle's words in their natural and obvious meaning.

4. The very principle, upon which they knew that their God had always proceeded, in blessing the offspring for their parents' sake, would prepare them to understand the Apostle in the sense we contend for. They knew that their God had shewn mercy unto thousands of the descendants of those that loved him; that the seed of the righteous had ever been blessed; that this very blessing of the Spirit was promised to their offspring, as well as themselves.\*

Now give to the terms "children," "seed" and "offspring," in these passages, what meaning you will, one thing is apparent;—that these "children," "seed" and "offspring,"

\*See Psal. cxii. 1, 2. Prov. xx. 7. Isai. xlv. 3—5. lxx. 29. Jer. xxxii. 39.

are blessed with spiritual blessings, yea, the very out-pouring of the Spirit, for their parents' sake. They are blessed as the offspring of believers, and that, by way of conferring a blessing indirectly upon their parents. Bearing this fact in mind, we must surely pause, before we limit the term "children," in the passage before us, to adult descendants, and exclude the rest of their offspring from all participation in the blessing. That they might as infants share this blessing, Baptists themselves believe; for they believe that many infants, dying as such, will be saved; and yet that none can be saved unless they are born of the Spirit. And even if they did not admit this truth, the Scriptures have decided it with sufficient plainness; for we are told that John "was filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb,"\* Here then we have these plain facts before us. Infants have received the Spirit even from their birth. Baptists believe they must receive it in order to be saved. Under the Jewish dispensation, infants were admitted to God's covenant, and shared its blessings; and it was the known and established principle of the Divine procedure under the Jewish economy, as well as the predicted one under the Christian, to admit them to share in spiritual blessings,—the very gift of the Spirit itself,—for their parents' sake. And to a people well acquainted with these truths, the Apostles declare in reference to the out-pouring of the Spirit, "the promise is unto you and to your children," How, I ask, must such persons, how must any persons, acquainted with these truths, and not biassed with some favourite system they are anxious to support, view this precious promise? Unquestionably, if they weigh the subject,—and without doing this, the ablest commentators may hazard the most untenable conjectures upon this or any other pas-

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sage,\*—they must come to the conclusion, that when the Apostle affirms, "the promise is unto you and to your

\*Dr. Whitby is quoted as asserting that "these words of St. Peter will not prove a right of infants to receive baptism; the promise there being that only of the Holy Ghost, mentioned in verses 16, 18." Dr. Whitby does say so, but he also says what completely removes the basis of our opponent's argument. He observes that "when it is said, ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, it is not intended, that every one of them upon their baptism should be endued with the extraordinary gifts of tongues and prophecy; for it is manifest from the history of the Acts, and especially from chapter vi. 3, that He was given only to some among them, though that, (baptism,) was for the benefit of all." If, therefore, our opponent is willing to abide by the authority of Whitby, he must surrender the argument drawn from the incapacity of infants, to "see visions, and prophesy, and speak with tongues," &c.—See his pamphlet, p. 41.

Dr. Doddridge is also quoted, as saying "that it seems most natural to interpret this as a reference to the passage in Joel;" but Dr. Doddridge adds the following words, which are equally worthy of attention. "But if the promise be interpreted as referring to a remoter clause, the forgiveness of their sins, this whole verse must be taken in a greater latitude, as referring to the encouragement which all future converts and their children had to expect the benefits of the Gospel. In which view, I think, it would much favour infant baptism, as many writers on the subject have largely shewn."

Matthew Henry's comment is as follows;—"Your children shall still have, as they have had, an interest in the covenant, and a title to the external seal of it: come over to Christ to receive those inestimable benefits, for the promise of the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, is to you and to your children, v. 39. It was very express, Isai. xlix. 3. "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed." And Isai. lix. 21. "My spirit and my word shall not depart from thy seed, and thy seed's seed." When God took Abraham into covenant, He said, "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed," Gen. xvii. 7; and accordingly every Israelite had his son circumcised at eight days old. Now it is proper for an Israelite, when he is by baptism to come into a dispensation to this covenant, to ask, what must be done with my children? Must they be thrown out, or taken in with me? Taken in (saith Peter) by all means; for the promise,—that great promise of God's being to you a God,—is as much to you and to your children now, as ever it was."

children," he means their children generally, without limitation of age--their offspring, whether adults or infants. This passage then is justly urged as one of many that furnishes collateral proof, that the infants of believers are interested in the gracious promises of the Christian covenant, and, as being so, should be admitted to the initiatory Sacrament of that covenant. It is believers and their offspring that are to come forward to baptism, for "the promise is unto them and their children."

Dr. Guyse remarks.—"It seems too narrow to confine the promise here mentioned to that in Joel ii., which Peter had referred to, in verses 16, 17, 18. For he there speaks of that promise as then accomplished in the effusion of the Spirit only on Jews; and though he there leads our thoughts to the tenor of God's covenant, relating to his people's seed together with themselves, as his Spirit should be poured out on their *sons and daughters*, under the Gospel dispensation, in which there is neither male nor female, but they are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. iii. 28); yet the promise here seems to look still further, to the grand promise that God made to Abraham and his seed in their several generations, and afterwards renewed, through the Old Testament dispensation, to Israel and their seed; and so intimates that the Gospel dispensation would be so far from repealing this promise, that it should be established, and take effect even among believing Gentiles, as well as Jews.

&c.

generally, without whether adults or infants. One of many that infants of believers are of the Christian community admitted to the initiation. It is believers and not infants, and as to baptism, for infants.

now to confine the promise which Peter had referred to that promise as then given to Jews; and though God's covenant, relating to himself, as his Spirit begets, under the name of male nor female, but yet the promise here is that God made to Abraham, and afterwards renewed, to Israel and their posterity, and that the promise would be so far established, and take effect in Jews.

## CHAPTER VII.

ON THE OBJECTIONS ADVANCED AGAINST THE  
CONNEXION OF THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN  
CHURCH; THE ABRAHAMIC AND CHRISTIAN COVE-  
NANT; AND THE RITES OF CIRCUMCISION AND  
BAPTISM.

It has been said, with more boldness than modesty, that "the advocates of Infant Baptism take refuge amidst the ceremonies of a darker dispensation, as the forlorn hope of an expiring cause."\* Whether their cause is expiring or not, time will shew; at present its vitality is confessed by a goodly portion of the Christian world. The Eastern

\*See Mr. C's Pamphlet, page 55.



Churches of Europe, with their fifty-six millions, confess it. The Western Churches of the Catholic persuasion, with more than a hundred millions, acknowledge it likewise. The reformed Churches of England and Scotland, Bohemia, Belgia, Augsburg, Saxony, Wirtemberg, Sweveland, all think it ought to live.\* The

\*The question of Infant Baptism was not passed over without examination by the reformed churches, when drawing up their confessions of faith. The attention of all appears to have been directed to it, and in each case with the same result,—an unanimous decision in its favour. The following extracts shew their view upon the subject.

From the latter confession of *Helvetia*.

"We condemn the Anabaptists who deny that young infants, born of faithful parents, are to be baptized. For according to the doctrine of the Gospel, "this is the kingdom of God." And they are written in the covenant of God. And why then should not the sign of the covenant be given to them? Why should they not be consecrated by holy baptism, who are God's peculiar people, and in the Church of God?"

From the confession of *Bohemia*.

"For these causes do our ministers, without any doubt, and boldly, baptize children in the name of the Holy Trinity, applying unto them a sign of most effectual virtue, and a most sure witness,—bearing of that thing which by Christ's own words is assigned to this age, and is imparted unto it. For so Christ in general, and without exception, giveth in charge, not touching some, but touching all, "Teach ye all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." And so over children this most holy name is called upon, in which alone there is salvation."

From the French Confession.

"Furthermore, although baptism be a sacrament of faith and repentance, yet, seeing that God doth together with the parents account their posterity also to be of the church, we affirm, that infants, being born of holy parents, are by the authority of Christ to be baptized."

From the confession of *Belgia*.

"Therefore here we do detest the error of the Anabaptists, who are not only not content with one only baptism, and that once received, but do also condemn the baptism of infants, yea, of those that be born of faithful parents; but we by the same reason do

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great majority of Christians in America think so too.  
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believe that they ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of  
the covenant, for the which in time past the infants among the  
Israelites were circumcised, that is, by reason of the same promises  
made unto our infants, that were made unto others.”

From the confession of *Augsburg*.

“Concerning baptism they teach \* \* \* \* that young infants  
are to be baptized, and that they, being by baptism commended  
unto God, are received into God’s favour, and are made the sons  
of God; as Christ witnesseth, speaking of little children in the  
church, (Matt. xviii.) “It is not the will of your heavenly Father,  
that any of these little ones should perish.”

From the confession of *Saxony*.

“We do also baptize infants, because it is most certain that the  
promise of grace doth pertain also of (to) infants, and to those only  
which are ingrafted into the church; because that of these it is  
said, ‘Suffer little ones to come unto me, because that to such  
appertaineth the kingdom of heaven.’ And Origen writeth upon  
the sixth of the Romans, ‘That the church received the custom  
of baptizing infants from the Apostles.’ Neither we think that this  
custom is only an idle ceremony, but that the infants are then in-  
deed received and sanctified of God, because that then they are  
grafted into the church, and the promise pertaineth to such. And  
of this matter there be many things written and published in our  
churches, whereby the Anabaptists are refuted.”

From the confession of *Wurtemberg*.

“We acknowledge that baptism is to be ministered as well to  
infants as to those that are grown to full age, and that it is to be  
used in the church, even to the end of this world, in the name of  
the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, according to  
Christ his institution.”

From the confession of *Sweveland*.

“Seeing that baptism is a sacrament of that covenant, which  
God hath made with those that be his, promising that he will be  
their God, and the God of their seed, \* \* \* therefore our preachers  
do teach, that it is to be given to infants also, as well as that in times  
past under Moses they were circumcised: for we are indeed the  
children of Abraham, and therefore that promise, ‘I will be thy  
God, and the God of thy seed,’ doth no less pertain unto us, than  
it did to that ancient people.”

Thomas in the East have given in their attestation to the same effect. All these think our cause ought not to expire, and there is one thing especially that makes us think it will not do so; viz., that our refuge is *not* sought amidst the ceremonies of a darker dispensation, but in *the promises of the Living God*; promises, sure as the truth of heaven, unchangeable as the eternal mind from whence they came. To these we shall now make our appeal. From these, as recorded in the Old Testament, which was written by inspiration as well as the New, we shall bring not merely "apparent" but real and substantial proofs, that infants are entitled to be admitted as members of the Church of God, and to the initiatory ordinance of that church; and then, as we know that Scripture cannot contradict itself, we shall upon good grounds conclude, that our opponents mis-interpret the New Testament, and that the supposed proofs they draw from thence against Infant Baptism are fallacious, being built upon a partial view of Revelation, and not upon a comprehensive survey of the whole counsel of God.

The views which our opponent advances, in regard to the Jewish and Christian Church, are as follows:—1st. That the sameness of the Jewish and Christian Church, if admitted, cannot establish infant baptism.\* 2dly, That the whole argument for their sameness rests upon a fallacy.† 3dly, That they cannot possibly be the same, for reasons which he assigns.‡ 4thly, That the particular arguments, by which their sameness is attempted to be proved, are insufficient.§ Let us examine these assertions in their order.

From the 27th Article of the Church of England.  
 "The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet p. 57. †Ibid p. 63. ‡Ibid p. 68. §Ibid p. 77.

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I. The sameness of the Jewish and Christian Church, if admitted, cannot establish Infant Baptism.

What are the reasons for this opinion? One is, that the argument derived from it, would prove a different thing,—that infants ought to be circumcised. A syllogism is exhibited to confirm this. A strange syllogism indeed! It has two middle terms, and therefore furnishes a false conclusion. Churches may be the same in essentials, or the same in essentials and circumstantialia also. Pædobaptists assert the former in regard to the Jewish and Christian Church, and upon this basis affirm the right of membership to in-

\*The syllogism is this—“Children being members of the Jewish church were circumcised; but children are members of the Christian church, because it is one and the same as the Jewish; Therefore, children ought now to be circumcised.” Mr. C’s pamphlet, p. 57.

When the first proposition of this syllogism is changed from its Modal to its Pure form, and when the second is divested of its accompanying proof, or in other words changed from an Epichirema into a single proposition, the argument will stand thus:—Infant members of the Jewish church were circumcised; but children are members of the Christian church; therefore children ought now to be circumcised.

Here, it is obvious, are two *middle terms*; Jewish Church,—Christian Church. If Pædobaptists maintained that these were the same in ceremonies as well as in essentials, the fallacy of this absurd argument would be chargeable upon them; but as they do not, it must rest with its author. He is however responsible for another argument of much sounder character. It may be stated thus;—

Unless proving the sameness of the Jewish and Christian churches, proves that the same ceremonies ought to be used in both, it will not follow that infants ought to be circumcised. But, proving the Jewish and Christian churches to be the same, does not prove that the same ceremonies are to be used in both. Therefore it will not follow, because the Jewish and Christian churches are the same, that infants ought to be circumcised.—As our opponent himself furnishes the minor proposition here, which is the only one upon which a question could be raised, we presume the argument must stand.

fants. Our opponent takes their words in a different sense, as if they meant to affirm that the Jewish and Christian church was the same in every thing, in ceremonies, as well as essentials: and then, upon this false view of the case, draws the absurd conclusion, that infants ought to be circumcised. This is the more remarkable as he tells us a little further on, "It is surprising that any one can be so dull, as not to perceive that proving the Jewish and Christian churches to be the same, does not prove that the same ceremonies are to be used in both."\* We wish no better comment upon the syllogism in question, than our author has here given. At the same time, we cannot forbear to express our regret<sup>†</sup> at the language of triumph and ridicule employed on this occasion. It is triumph without victory, and ridicule where serious argument would have better suited the sacredness of the subject.

Another objection urged is that our argument would prove too much; viz: "that female infants ought not to be baptized, and that all servants, dependants, &c. ought to be so."<sup>†</sup>

The first of these assertions we grant. The argument simply considered in itself would prove, that female infants ought not to be baptized, and so it would that female adults ought not to be baptized. But this very circumstance shews us the soundness of the argument. For the inspired writers knew that it would prove this, and therefore have expressly made an exception in favour of females. They are not, we are told, under the Gospel, to be subject to the same distinction as under the Law. Under the Law they were not admitted to the initiatory ordinance, but under the Gospel they are, because for "in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female." Now let

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 62.

†Ibid, p. 57.

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our Baptist opponents shew us another exception, in the case of infants. Let them point out a passage that says they are to be treated differently under the Gospel, from what they were under the Law, and we will bow to it. But if they cannot do this,—if the inspired writers are utterly silent upon the subject,—we must plainly understand the reason, viz. that no such exception was ever intended to be made. We may truly say then in this case, that the exception confirms the general rule where no exception is made, viz. in the case of infants.

But, says our opponent, "in like manner we may prove that a man's servants and dependants ought to be baptized as well as his children."\* We freely grant it. The proposition is perfectly true. We need not go to the Jewish Church to prove it, for Jesus said, "Go, and baptize all nations." Servants are a part of nations, as well as children, and the Apostles, we presume, when they baptized the households of the Jailor, Stephanas, and Lydia, did not except them. Our author means, however, that we must baptize them *by compulsion*, without any profession of faith or religion. This, he informs us, was the law of circumcision. "Here was no waiting to know whether they had faith or not, no enquiry whether they gladly received the word, or possessed any religious character. The law was peremptory, it must be obeyed."† Now all this is mere gratuitous assertion. The Bible does not afford a shadow of proof to sustain it. The law of God required that no stranger should be admitted to the Passover, unless he first submitted to circumcision,‡ and that every member of Abraham's family, which was in fact the visible church of that day, should be initiated into the Divine covenant by the same rite.§ But is it said

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 58.

†Ibid.

‡Exod. xii. 48.

§Upon Gen. xvii. 13, "He that is born in thy house, and he

that this was to be done in the case of adults by compulsion? Is it said that it was to be done without previous instruction? Is it probable that the Father of the faithful retained around him a household of uninstructed infidels? Or have we any right to say that he administered to them the sign of the covenant, without receiving their assent to the great truths it proposed? Look at the portrait of this eminent servant of God, as drawn by the Most High himself, and let it be a sufficient answer to these vague assumptions. "I know him," said the Almighty, "that he will command his household and his children after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.\*"

Such objections as those we have now adverted to, when gravely advanced by writers, who may be supposed to say the best things that can be said on the Baptist system, ought certainly to confirm Pædobaptists in their views of the question, for undoubtedly that cause must at least be questionable, which can need the support of such arguments. When we consider the close analogy between the rites of circumcision and baptism,—an analogy to be clearly traced in their leading design, their spiritual import, their relation to the Church of God, the qualifications they demand, and the obligations they entail, it is surprising, that any reflecting person can be found to

that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised," Bishop Patrick remarks—"Not whether they would or no; for men were not to be compelled to religion,—which had been a profanation of this covenant; but Abraham was to persuade them to it, and, if they consented not, to keep them no longer in his house, but to sell them to some other people. So Maimonides expounds it, in his book of circumcision, Chap. I." See also Bishop Patrick on Exod. xii. 44, where the further circumstance of a year's time for consideration is noted.

\*Gen. xviii. 19.



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deny it. It is however denied; and we are now to consider what is said upon two particulars in which that analogy is traced, viz. their spiritual import, and their relation to the Church of God, as initiatory ordinances.

1. Their import. We are told "that the signification of circumcision is nowhere stated in the Old Testament; and in the New, the very passages which cast light on its signification, shut out the possibility of baptism, as an ordinance administered to infants, having come in lieu of circumcision."\* Here we have two assertions. Let us weigh them.

First—"The signification of circumcision is nowhere stated in the Old Testament." Strange indeed! Nowhere stated in the Old Testament! Is it not in the Old Testament we meet the command, "Circumcise therefore the fore-skin of *your heart*, and be no more stiff-necked?"† Is it not in the Old Testament we meet the promise, "The Lord thy God will *circumcise thine heart*, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live?"‡ Is it not there we find the denunciation, "I will punish all them that are circumcised with the uncircumcised, \* \* \* for all the house of Israel *are uncircumcised in the heart*?"§ These passages state, as explicitly as any contained in the New Testament, that the thing signified by circumcision was a *change of heart*; a change by which "the love of God" was to be restored to the heart, in place of a spirit of rebellion against him. They shew more;—they shew that this spiritual circumcision was not merely signified emblematically, but demanded unequivocally of the Jewish people, as much as of the Christian at the present hour,

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, page 59.

†Deut. x. 16.

‡Deut, xxx. 6.

§Jer. ix. 25, 26.



and that the want of it in the former was the grand cause of those appalling judgments, which God inflicted upon their nation.

Secondly,—We are told that “in the New Testament, the very passages, which cast light on its signification, shut out the possibility of baptism, as an ordinance administered to infants, having come in lieu of circumcision;” and we are then referred to Colossians ii. 11, and Romans ii. 28, 29, as containing full proof of this position.\* The argument when formally stated is simply this—

Circumcision, as practised under the law, signified, that all the members of the Christian church would be truly circumcised in heart, i. e. regenerated:

But it is impossible for any one to say whether infants have this regeneration or not:

Therefore they ought not to be admitted members of the Christian church by baptism.

Upon this argument we make two remarks—

Our first is, that circumcision under the Law *was not a type of regeneration under the Gospel*. It was a symbol of regeneration to those who received it, precisely as baptism is at the present hour. The passages already quoted from the Old Testament shew plainly what circumcision was designed to be, viz. a sign of what God demanded from the persons who received it; but there is no evidence whatever, that it was further designed to be a type of regeneration under the gospel. The mere use of the terms “circumcision of Christ,” or “circumcision of heart,” by the sacred writers, is no warrant for such an idea. In short, the principle, upon which this whole argument proceeds, that every thing under the Jewish economy was, in some way or other, typical of a purely spiritual church

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 60.

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under the gospel, is without foundation.\* The Quakers upon this principle supersede all outward ordinances,† and in their case, we confess, practice is consistent with theory; but in the case of baptists, this consistency is not maintained; the principle is condemned by their practice, as well as by the word of God.

Our second remark is,—that even if circumcision under the law had been meant to typify spiritual circumcision under the gospel, it could never have been intended to indicate, that all the members of the Christian church would be truly circumcised in heart. If it signified this, it would signify what is false; for this is certainly not the fact, in any Christian congregation on earth. And yet, if it signified any thing less than this, it signified nothing to the point in hand; for the whole objection to infant members, as derived from this source, goes upon the supposition that they cannot possibly be members of the Christian church, unless they are truly circumcised in heart. No man, we think, who candidly weighs these points, can retain the mistaken idea, that the spiritual import of circumcision affords any argument against Infant Baptism.

We are next told, by way of destroying the parallel between circumcision and baptism, as it regards their import, that the former was significant of regeneration *to come*, but the latter of "regeneration *effected in the heart*."‡ Well, this is an ingenious theory, but the

\*The sacrifices of the Law presented a shadow, or imperfect sketch, of good things to come (Heb. x. 1.); but where is it said, that circumcision had this reference to a subsequent dispensation?

†With regard to water-baptism their language is, "that it belonged to an inferior dispensation;" and with regard to the Lord's Supper—"that communion between Christ, and his church, is not maintained by that, nor any other external performance, but only by a real participation of the Divine nature;—and that *where the substance is attained, it is unnecessary to attend to the shadow*."

‡Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 60.

Scripture knows nothing about it. It is not true that circumcision, as an emblem, was *exclusively prospective*; or that baptism, as an emblem, is *exclusively retrospective*. The truth is, that circumcision was an emblem of that internal purity, which God required of his people, and was administered sometimes to those who, like Abraham, already possessed it;—sometimes to infants who were afterwards to be brought to possess it;—and sometimes to both infants and adults who never possessed it at all. So is it with baptism. Baptism was administered to the Eunuch, who already possessed true piety;—to Simon Magus, who possessed it not;—and no doubt to numbers then, as is still the case among all denominations, who never possessed it at all. If then, as an emblem, it could only be retrospective, it certainly was not an emblem adapted to the state of the Christian church. But where is the authority for saying that baptism means exclusively “something that *is* done, not something to *be* done?”\*

Our opponent refers to two passages which, he thinks, support this view.

The first is 1 Peter, iii. 21. Here we find the words, “baptism saves us,” which he understands to mean, that the outward ordinance saves us, “as it is significant of the answer of a good conscience towards God.” We question the correctness of this comment upon St. Peter’s words. Whatever connexion the Apostle means to intimate between baptism and a good conscience, he appears to speak of the former as saving *instrumentally*, rather than *emblematically*. But suppose the latter view to be correct, what warrant have we for saying, that this “answer of a good conscience” means “spiritual cleansing” *already obtained*? Why not spiritual cleansing de-

\*Mr. C’s Pamphlet, p. 60.

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*manded, expected, required?* Why not spiritual cleansing *promised, stipulated for?*\* If the terms "answer of a good conscience" express the inward grace, of which baptism is the outward sign, there is nothing in the passage to determine which must precede the other; but a close examination of the passage, we think, must lead to the conclusion, that these terms rather express the demand or stipulation for purity to be exhibited in the after life, and that baptism, as far as it is an emblem of any personal quality in the recipient, refers to this. The passage, therefore, so far from supporting the view it is adduced to prove, is directly opposed to it.

Our author next refers to the expression "buried with him in baptism," (Col. ii. 11,) which he considers as equivalent to the expression "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," which occurs in the next verse, and both to mean *regeneration*. But, he says, in the first of these expressions, the Apostle "puts the sign for the thing signified; he speaks of being *buried in baptism*, meaning *regeneration*, language he could never have employed, unless persons who were buried in water by baptism, had indeed become dead to the world and sin."† But why not, we ask, employ this language, where persons become *pledged* to die to sin, and rise to a life of righteousness? Why should the baptismal washing be viewed as emblematical of that incipient principle of grace, which leads a man to dedicate himself to the service of Christ, in the first instance, rather than of the entire operations and effects of that principle, as exhibited in the after life? Read

\*The word, *πρωτημα*, here rendered "answer," refers to the stipulation of a covenant, and may signify either the *demand of certain terms*, on the one side, or, by metonymy, the *assent or promise* on the other.

†Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 61.

with attention Rom. vi. 4. "Therefore," says the Apostle, "we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, *even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" Here the thing indicated by our baptism, is "*newness of life.*" Read with care the previous verse—"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were *baptized into his death?*" The words "baptized into his death," Professor Ripley considers to mean the having "by our baptism, engaged to *die unto sin*, as he died for sin." This is precisely the Apostle's idea, but it is diametrically opposed to the view we are combating; it supposes the baptismal washing to be emblematical of a prospective holiness. The church of England in her baptismal office admirably expresses this point. "Baptism," she tells us, "doth represent unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him; that as he died and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized die from sin and rise again: unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living."

2. The next analogy between circumcision and baptism is traced in their relation to the church of God as *initiatory ordinances.*

The argument has been thus stated;—

"They are both initiatory ordinances, the one to Judaism, the other to Christianity. Judaism has been succeeded by Christianity. Consequently, circumcision has been succeeded by baptism.†"

Whether the argument here is stated with logical precision or not, we do not inquire, but we are constrained

\*See his words as quoted in Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 114.

† See Mr. Elder's Letters, p. 22.

says the Apostle, to death, that like the glory of the newness of life." is "newness of life." "Know ye into Jesus Christ words "baptized" considers to mean the unto sin, as he Apostle's idea, but it are combating; it emblematical of a land in her baptism. "Baptism," our profession, our Christ, and and rose again die from sin and y mortifying all y proceeding in

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to pause, with some surprise, over the remark it has elicited.

The position that "Judaism has been succeeded by Christianity," our opponent seems to think, must mean one of two things; either that Christianity has simply *followed* Judaism, without any connexion between them, or that "Judaism is Christianity,"—absolutely one and the same thing.\* Now we humbly conceive that, upon fair construction, it means neither, but that the one has superseded the other, with that connexion and correspondence which may be supposed to subsist between two Divine dispensations, successively introduced for the same great and important ends. But overlooking this fair construction of the terms, and substituting one which they will not bear, our opponent constructs upon them the following syllogism;—

"Circumcision was the initiatory ordinance of Judaism;  
But Judaism is Christianity:—therefore

Circumcision is the initiatory ordinance of Christianity."†

There is little genuine logic here. Who is responsible for the second proposition? No Pædobaptist that we are acquainted with; for it is surely one thing to say, as Pædobaptists do, that the church of God, whether under the Christian or Jewish dispensation is one church; and another, to say that "Judaism is Christianity." Ridicule is not the test of truth, and is always out of place when speaking upon subjects connected with religion. We regret therefore to find it employed by our opponent on the present occasion. The assertion that "Judaism has been succeeded by Christianity" afforded no just scope for it. Had the simple meaning of its author been affixed

\*See Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 61. †Ibid. p. 62.

to it, and we should think that meaning sufficiently obvious, the pains of constructing a syllogism, which has neither logic nor truth in it, might have been spared. But let us proceed to the question at issue,—the analogy between circumcision and baptism. What is admitted, and what is denied upon this point?

It is admitted, that they have both been instituted initiatory ordinances of the Church of God.\* Upon this point therefore, there is no dispute.—It is denied that they have been to the same extent, that is, to the same classes of persons. Baptism, it is said, “is the initiatory ordinance of believers, not of infants.”<sup>†</sup> And why? Because in the New Testament “we see it only administered to believers, as significant of spiritual cleansing.”<sup>‡</sup> And is this a sufficient reason for refusing it to infants, when the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, tells you in various ways they ought to receive it? From the time that the Jewish nation entered the Land of Promise, nay, from the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai, to the birth of John the Baptist, a period of fifteen centuries, we have not recorded in Scripture a single instance of infant circumcision, yet we know that every native Jew during that period had received it at eight days old. Shall we then think, that the mere circumstance of no specific example of infant baptism being recorded in the succinct accounts of the Christian church contained in the Acts of the Apostles, ought to counteract the evidence arising from the plainly declared will of God respecting their membership in his Church,—the emphatic assurance of Christ to the same effect,—the evident analogy between circumcision and baptism,—the command of Jesus to baptize all,—the practice of the Apostles in baptizing

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 62.



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households,—their manner of speaking of children as church members,—and the unbroken testimony of credible witnesses, that they have always been baptized in the Christian church? Suppose that, many years ago, there had stood, in some part of Halifax, a venerable mansion, with a door of peculiar architecture, and occupied by a peculiar people, who nevertheless, like others, were punctual in entering their house by the door; nay, at the very time when the building was erected, an inscription had been placed over the door, "This is the common entrance for all the members of the family, old and young." Suppose the building was still standing, and inhabited by the successors of this family, who bore a marked resemblance in their principles and character to their ancestors. About the time of their succession, however, the building had been somewhat altered. The roof had been extended so as to shelter more persons; the windows enlarged, so as to admit more light; the door simplified, so as to be more easy of access; the foundation extended in proportion to the roof by the addition of some fresh stones, but all resting upon the same corner stone. Ought we now, from the fact of these alterations having been made, to conclude that this family, or any part of them, did not enter their house by the door? Would it be reasonable to infer, that, because on the new work round the door there could no fresh inscription be found, though one was still as visible as ever, or because, for a short time after the new work was put up, there was no record of any infant having been carried in by the door, therefore they ought not to be suffered to enter in that way, but must be thrust through a window, or let down through the tilings of the roof, or left without, exposed to wind and rain, until they grew up to maturity? Our opponents tell us, the building is not the same; we shall



therefore consider now their observations upon this point.

II. The sameness of the Jewish and Christian church, they think, is not proved. Let our readers call to mind what Pædobaptists mean, when they assert the sameness of the Jewish and Christian church, and why they assert it. They mean that they are the same in their foundation and design,—the same in their essential principles, those principles which alone can affect the question of infant membership. Their opponents require them to adduce a command for the admission of infants to baptism. They demand in return the sentence of their exclusion. The church, we may say, is *one*. God, at the beginning of it, gave such a command. He has never revoked it. And who is authorized to revoke it for Him? To negative the force of this reasoning, Baptists labour to disprove the sameness of the Jewish and Christian church. And how?

The whole argument we are told is built upon a fallacy. "Its fallacy consists in this, that it confounds together, as one and the same thing, true religion, and the dispensation, the economy, or, if you choose to call it so, the church, in or under which it has pleased God at different periods to preserve or foster true religion."\* But how can this charge be sustained? In what way do we confound these things together? We prove the sameness of the church by the sameness of its essential principles and characteristics. From this sameness, thus established, we infer the right of infant membership, and then from analogy we conclude, that similar rites will be applied to similar members, under similar circumstances. How is this to confound true religion with the dispensation by which it is fostered? While however we deny the charge of confounding these things, we cannot exempt our opponent from the charge of still greater confusion.

\*Mr. C's, Pamphlet, p. 63.

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It needs no further proof than the passage we have just quoted, to shew that he has most strangely confounded the terms *church* and *dispensation*, as if they were equivalent or convertible terms. But this they certainly are not. A dispensation is "a peculiar form of administering the affairs of the church of God," and our author occasionally alludes to it in this view, as an "economy," or "organized system,"—a "state of things under which we live."\* Yet, strange to say, he makes this dispensation the church of the Living God, the very people or "nation" who were members of it;† and then he argues, —The church was a nation; that nation was a dispensation; but the dispensation passed away, therefore the nation, therefore the church. Certainly the process is easy upon this system! But how lamentably deficient, in point of accuracy and sound argument, is this view of the case!

And where lies the root of all this confusion and error? Simply here;—in mistaking the true nature of the Jewish and Christian church. In common with many of his brethren, in past days, as well as the present, he regards the Jewish as a mere carnal or typical church, and the Christian as a perfectly spiritual one,—the antitype of the former. "The Jewish church," he says, "consisted of a nation which were the children of Abraham really, i. e. by descent, while the Christian church consists of a nation who are the children of Abraham spiritually, i. e. by faith;"‡ and he further informs us that of this "spiritual nation the Jewish nation was typical."§ Now whatever attractions this system may possess, and we doubt not that many pious minds have embraced it, we are constrained to view it as wanting the seal of truth, nay, as decisively op-

\*See his Pamphlet, p. 64. †Ibid. ‡Ibid, p. 68. §Ibid p. 64.

posed, in both its branches, to the testimony of Scripture.

1. It is not true that the Christian church is a *purely spiritual church*. The church of God may be viewed in two different lights; as the *mystical church*, comprising the collective body of true believers in every age, from the foundation of the world to its termination; or, as the *visible church*, consisting of that society of men who are professors of true religion, and as such distinguished from the rest of mankind. The *former* may, in the sense of our author, be termed a spiritual nation or church; but the *latter*, which under the present economy is the Christian church, cannot be so styled with propriety. Spiritual in some respects we freely admit this church to be; it is spiritual in regard to the great design of its formation, viz. to foster spiritual religion in the hearts of men, and prepare them for a spiritual world;—spiritual as to the effect and tendency of its ministrations;—spiritual as to the means it employs, its oracles, doctrines, and ordinances being under the guidance of the Spirit of God; but when this term is employed to designate universally the religious state of its members, and is applied to them under the idea, that its strict appropriation to the entire collective body, or at least to the great majority of them, is to determine their claim to be considered as a church, we hesitate not to say that the application of it is wholly unscriptural. The Christian church, as it regards the character of its members, is a mixed body, composed of men who profess the true faith of Christ, and acknowledge, as their rule of life, the laws and institutions of his Gospel; but not all under the saving influence of that faith, or maintaining, by means of it, a vital union with their acknowledged Head. It is a society, in which the good and evil are mingled together in ever varying proportions. This is the view which its Divine Founder has given of

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it in prospect. This is the view which his Apostles have given of its actual state. This is the condition in which we behold it at the present hour, even among those societies of Christians who embrace the mistaken view we are combating. And this, we venture to say, is the aspect it will always, in a greater or less degree, present, until translated from its militant state below to a triumphant one above.\*

2. Equally incorrect is it to regard the Jewish church as a mere carnal society, and designed only to be a type of the Gospel church.

Our opponent says, "The Jewish Church by its constitution consisted of a nation which were the children of Abraham really, that is, by *descent*."† By saying it "consisted of a nation," does he mean us to understand, that the church and nation were *co-extensive*; or that the church was a mere *political* society? If the former, the truth or fallacy of the statement is not very material; if the latter, it is decidedly wrong. Again, when he tells us, that this church and nation were the children of Abraham by descent, does he mean that they were *all* so, or that they were *merely* so? That they were *all* so is certainly untrue, for there were thousands that were members of that church, who were Gentiles by descent, and had no natural relationship to Abraham whatever. And to say that the members of that church were Abraham's children *merely* by descent, would be equally erroneous, for there were many, even in the most degenerate times, who were his children in a higher sense,—his children spiritually,—by *sharing his faith*.

He further tells us, that "the Jewish nation was typical of a spiritual nation,"‡ that is, the Christian church.

\*See this point more fully discussed in Chap. XII.

†Page 68.

‡Page 64.

This view of the case is plausible, for, no doubt, in the entire history of that people, their captivities, deliverances, laws and ceremonies, we trace innumerable types of future things. But the statement, after all, conveys a very false idea of the design and character of the Jewish church; it conveys the idea that their nation, as a church, was *merely a typical society*, and that, in its typical character, it referred exclusively to the *Christian church as its antitype*.

With regard to the latter sentiment, we must regard it as far too contracted a view of the typical character of the Jewish nation. Types and shadows abounded throughout their whole dispensation; but to what did these various prefigurations point? Some of them to events, which, strictly speaking, preceded the actual establishment of the Christian dispensation. Such were the incarnation, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ; these facts took place before the Mosaic economy was superseded by the Gospel,—before “the ministration of the Spirit” had suspended the authority of “the ministration of death.” Others there were, that pointed to the trials and privileges of the Christian church; and a third class that referred to events and blessings, which are to be realized beyond the confines of time, in the exalted and glorified state of the church. Their inheritance in Canaan, for example, was typical of the eternal inheritance; their city, of the heavenly Jerusalem; their inner sanctuary, of the sanctuary above; their priesthood, though deficient in many particulars, of the priesthood of Jesus; and the worship offered by their different tribes, of the adorations of that vast multitude of every nation, who shall meet hereafter before the throne of God. The church triumphant is, in fact, that spiritual church, to which the grand prefigurations of the Jewish worship, es-

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pecially as it regarded the character of the worshippers; had reference. The antitype, in this instance, is not the earthly church, even under a dispensation where "life and immortality are brought to light," but that church which is called "the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in Heaven.\* This, as it regards the character of its members, is the true spiritual church of Christ, into which no hypocrite, no unbeliever, no unclean person can enter; but every other, even the Christian church, in its highest state of spiritual advancement, is only a type or visible representation of this. And in this respect it perfectly corresponds with the Jewish church. It is only a more perfect type or representation of that celestial society; being in point of light and privilege and piety, advanced more near to its glory. But would it not be strange, that this more perfect type should fail to shadow forth its antitype, in one striking and important particular, where the Jewish church did not fail to do it, viz. the membership of infants? They were members under the first dispensation, and they will be under the final one; but, during the intermediate one, they are to be altogether excluded.—Is not this want of uniformity unlike the course of the Divine Government?

But the Jewish church had a higher design than to furnish our minds with any typical representation whatever. Whether in its collective character it presented a shadow of earth or heaven, it answered, and was designed to answer, a more immediate and important end; it was a society of men professing the true religion, formed into one compact body, for the cherishing, fostering, and regular transmission from generation to generation of that same

\*Heb. xii. 22, 24,—viii. 2, 5.—ix. 23, 24. Rev. xxi.

vital and spiritual religion, which forms the blessedness and glory of the Gospel church. The Psalmist gives us the true idea of God's gracious design in this respect. "He made a covenant with Jacob, and gave Israel a law, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, that their posterity might know it, and the children which were yet unborn, to the intent that, when they came up, they might shew their children the same; that they might put their trust in God, and not to forget the works of God, but to keep his commandments: and not to be, as their forefathers, a faithless and stubborn generation, a generation that set not their hearts aright, and whose spirit cleaveth not stedfastly unto God."\* How beautiful is the description contained in these words! How admirably does it pourtray the wise design of the Eternal in giving a law and covenant to his ancient people! It was not, you perceive, to hold them up as a mere adumbration of a "spiritual Israel," to spring forth in the latter day; it was not to render them a nation of mere formalists, elected as the emblem of a nation of true believers in a distant age; but "to put his laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts;" to lead them "to put their trust in God, to forget not his works," "to keep his commandments," "to set their hearts aright," to "cleave in spirit stedfastly unto God." And most admirably were the means enjoined adapted to the end in view; especially that principle of the Divine government, which taught them to regard their offspring as interested in the covenanted blessings with which they were favoured, and required them to educate them as such, and to make them acquainted at an early period, with the character, works, and will of God, and train them up as members of his church, and heirs of his everlasting heaven. It was not

\*Psal. lxxviii. 5-8. Prayer-book version.

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a system that left it optional to rising generations, whether they would be placed under the bonds of the Divine covenant or not; which permitted them to grow up within the visible pale of the church, without any visible connexion with it; thus blending, in the endearments of social life, the professors of true religion with those who professed it not, and preparing the way for the extinction of its very form; but a system which provided for the extension, permanency, and regular transmission of the principles of that religion which was to flourish to a certain extent under that economy, but still more widely and extensively under the gospel of Christ. It is utterly then a false view of the case, to regard the Jewish as a mere typical church, of which the spiritual antitype was to be realized under the Gospel; it was a visible church containing within it a spiritual church; a true Israel within a professing Israel; a people to whom the ordinances of religion were really and effectually means of grace and salvation. It was not like the unplanted acorn, presenting to the eye a mere shell, and containing motionless within the kernel, that which was to spring forth at a future period; but it was the acorn planted, springing up, assuming the form of a tree, limited indeed as to the space it covered, and checked as yet in its growth by the cold atmosphere of spring, but yet living, growing, expanding, and putting forth the very branches and leaves, that were to bloom and flourish more abundantly under kindlier skies in the latter day,—yes, bloom and flourish until its branches reached to heaven.

III. Sadly erroneous then is that view of the Jewish and Christian church, which regards them as standing opposed to each other, as the carnal to the spiritual, the typical to the real church, and upon which the false con-



clusion is built, that "they cannot be the same."\* It is attempted however to support this mistaken view of the case by an appeal to the Abrahamic covenant. We shall therefore proceed to examine the statements which our opponent has made in regard to this subject.—The substance of them is, that God "made two distinct covenants with Abraham," a temporal and a spiritual one, and annexed circumcision exclusively to the former, as its sign and seal.† Here then are two points to be investigated; 1st, Did God make two distinct covenants with Abraham, one a temporal, the other a spiritual one? 2dly. Did he annex circumcision exclusively to the temporal covenant?

1. Did God make two distinct covenants with Abraham, one a temporal, the other a spiritual one? To this we answer without hesitation that there is no sufficient warrant to conclude that he did.

The Scriptures nowhere affirm it. The first mention of a covenant with Abraham is on the occasion referred to in Gen. xv, when, by Divine appointment, a sacrifice was slain and divided, which was the ancient mode of entering into covenant. This covenant is again referred to in the 17th chapter, but still as one. And so throughout the Bible. The Psalmist speaks of "the covenant made with Abraham;"‡ Zacharias of "the holy covenant which God confirmed to Abraham by oath;"§ and St. Peter of "the covenant which God made with the fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."|| In all these cases, we hear of but one covenant with Abraham. Upon the subject of two separate and distinct covenants, the Scriptures are

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 68. †Ibid, p. 74. ‡Psalm. cv. 9.  
§Luke i. 72. ||Acts iii. 25.

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utterly silent, and this in itself is a strong evidence that the whole theory is without any solid foundation.

But a still stronger evidence against this theory arises from a close comparison of the several passages in Genesis, where the divine interviews with Abraham are related. One of these is described in the 12th chapter; another in the 13th; a third in the 15th; a fourth in the 17th; and a fifth in the 22d. On the first of these occasions, we find that God bestowed upon Abraham several gracious promises, and among them we distinctly trace the temporal promises that related to Canaan, and the spiritual promises that pointed to salvation through Christ. On the second and third occasions the promises are more briefly expressed, but still they appear to be only successive renewals of the former ones. In both, the promise of a numerous seed does not merely relate to the literal descendants of Abraham, but likewise to the spiritual seed, of which he was to be the father. On the fourth occasion,—that related in the 17th chapter, the two-fold character of the promises is still more apparent; and in the 22d chapter, it is plainly and fully developed. It is a fact which a faithful survey of these different passages must bring to light, that every one of these several statements contains the temporal promises, and every one, with equal certainty, though not with equal clearness, the spiritual promises. Is it not absurd then to call these renewals of the gracious promises of God, distinct and separate covenants? Is it not far more correct to regard them, as the Scripture every where represents them, as one covenant, but containing under its several gracious promises, some of a temporal, and some of a spiritual nature?

2. Let us however suppose, for argument's sake, that there were two separate covenants entered into with Abraham, and then ask, whether, upon that supposition, it

can be shewn that God annexed circumcision exclusively to the temporal covenant as its sign and seal? We are firmly persuaded that it cannot, and that whatever temporal covenant was made with Abraham, that recorded in the 17th chapter to which circumcision is annexed, is the everlasting covenant of grace. We are led to this conclusion by observing the nature of the promise it contains, and the design of the seal that was annexed to it.

1. The seal annexed to it was circumcision, and this, St. Paul tells us, was "a seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham had, yet being uncircumcised,"—in other words, it was a sign of confirmation to assure him of his justification through the faith he had previously exercised.\* Now what was this faith? It was the faith he exercised in the Divine promise, that his seed should be as the stars of heaven for multitude, which was given him probably seventeen years before, and which the Apostle teaches us to understand in reference to his *spiritual* seed.† It is evident, then, that circumcision by the plain declaration of the Apostle, was given as a sign, not of a temporal, but of a spiritual blessing, viz. justification; and that the faith it stood connected with had also reference to the spiritual blessings of the Gospel. How then is it possible that the covenant to which it was annexed should be merely a temporal covenant?

2. But look at the promises of that covenant as stated in Genesis xvii.

\* "The meaning of the whole verse is, That Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a confirmation of his justification by faith in an uncircumcised state; and this was thus solemnly confirmed, in order that he might be a spiritual father,—that is, an eminent pattern or example, to Gentiles who would also be gratuitously justified in an uncircumcised state." Stuart on Romans, page 184.

† Rom. iv. 16, 18.

## CONNECTION

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One is that Abraham should be "the father of many nations," and in confirmation of this, his name is changed to Abraham, which signifies the "father of a great multitude." Let St. Paul interpret this passage,—"*Abraham*," he tells us, "is the father of us all," that is, of all believers, "according as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations."\* It is plain that this promise refers to the Gospel.

Another is,—"*I will be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee.*" Taking the same inspired interpreter for our guide as before, we find that "the seed" here referred to, are the spiritual seed of Abraham:† and that the promise to be "a God to them," had reference to those eternal blessings which true believers enjoy through the salvation of Christ.‡ Justly has it been said of this gracious promise, that "it is not limited to the present state of being,—it is one that is too large for time,—one that dies not of itself, when sin dies in the believer. It runs into,—it runs throughout eternity. The bliss of heaven, through all the countless ages of it, is summed up in this, "*I will be to them a God.*" Hence you find it expressly mentioned as making the perfect bliss of the saints, in that continuing city which is to come, (Rev. xxi. 3.) "*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*" §

Another gracious promise, recorded in the passage we are reviewing, was that God would give to Abraham and to his seed after him, "all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession." This promise embraced, no doubt, the earthly Canaan, but it looked much further, even to heaven itself; and upon the strength of this, and similar

\*Rom. iv. 13, 16, 17. †Gal. iii. 6. ‡Heb. viii. 10. xi. 16. Matt. xxii. 31, 32. §"Good on the better Covenant." page 164.

assurances it was, that this Patriarch's faith embraced the glorious prospect of an eternal inheritance.\*

Comprising then, as we see this passage† does, the choicest of those precious promises, which are conveyed to us under the gospel, and which reach to the spiritual and eternal blessings of heaven, how is it possible for us to regard the covenant to which it relates, as a mere temporal covenant; and as standing distinct in its nature and design, from that covenant of grace, which at this very period was "confirmed of God in Christ,"‡ for the purpose of conveying these very promises and blessings? To regard it in this view, it would be requisite to close our eyes against the light, which is derived from some of the clearest and most explicit declarations of the New Testament. It would be necessary to reject the information which the inspired writers under the Gospel have given us, and to construe the gracious language of the ancient charter of our hopes, in a sense essentially different from that in which Abraham and his believing successors appear to have understood it.

Upon the whole, therefore, our conclusions are,—that the entire theory of two Abrahamic covenants is mere assumption, without any scriptural warrant for its adoption; and that even if such a theory could be supported, it would still be abundantly evident, that the covenant referred to in the 19th of Genesis, to which circumcision is annexed, as the sign and seal, is the eternal covenant of grace.

One further effort, however, is made, to sever the link of connection between the Jewish and Christian Church, by an appeal to the 8th chapter of Hebrews, where the Apostle shews the distinction between the Old and the New covenant, describing the one as "the better covenant

\*Heb. xi. 9, 10, 13, 16. †Gen. xvii. 1, 14. ‡Gal. iii. 17.

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established upon better promises," and the other as the  
"first covenant," which had now "waxed old, and was  
ready to vanish away."—This language, it is said, "shews  
beyond all question, that there was a radical difference  
between the covenants, on which the Jewish and Chris-  
tian churches rested."\* We entirely differ from this opi-  
nion, and are astonished that any should entertain it, but  
those who fail to perceive what covenants they are of  
which the Apostle speaks. As to the one which he terms  
the Old or First covenant, we are plainly told what it was,  
viz. "the covenant God had made with their fathers on  
the day when he took them by the hand, to lead them out  
of the land of Egypt,"—in other words, the covenant estab-  
lished at Mount Sinai; and which is sometimes called "the  
Law," because it was accompanied with a full and expli-  
cit promulgation of the moral and ceremonial law. But  
this covenant was not, as our opponent imagines, "in every  
essential respect, the same as that made with Abraham,  
in Gen. xvii."† We have already shewn that the cove-  
nant spoken of in Gen. xvii., is essentially the same as the  
Gospel covenant, and is distinguished from that of Sinai  
as being the covenant of promise. These two covenants  
are in fact constantly placed in counter-position to each  
other, under the distinguishing titles of "the law," and  
"the promise," because these were their distinctive cha-  
racteristics. The former was the national covenant, es-  
tablished with Israel for temporary ends, and which,  
when those ends were answered, "waxed old and vanish-  
ed." The latter was the eternal covenant of grace, which  
from the days of Abraham, nay, from the fall of man, when  
the first promise of a Redeemer was given, down to the  
present hour, whether under the Patriarchal, Mosaic, or  
Christian dispensation, has been the foundation of the

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 72.  
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†Ibid, p. 73.

hopes, prospects, principles, faith, holiness, and salvation of the church of God. This gracious covenant was never superseded by any subsequent one, from the moment when it was solemnly ratified with Abraham; the covenant of the law was superadded to it 430 years afterwards, but could neither disannul nor suspend it for a single hour. It continued still in force, and was, for the fifteen centuries when the law prevailed, the only medium of salvation to the Jewish Church. And this is the identical covenant, which, in the viii. of Hebrews, is termed *the better covenant*, established upon better promises, and *the New covenant*, because it was then fully promulgated by the Son of God, and confirmed and sealed by his precious blood.\* The viii. chapter of Hebrews does not therefore shew, as our opponent thinks, that there was a radical difference between the covenants upon which the Jewish and Christian churches rested, but merely that there was a radical difference between the national covenant formed at Sinai, and that more gracious covenant, established with Abraham, and finally ratified and sealed by the blood of Christ, by which salvation was promised, through grace, to Abraham and his believing children, down to the end of the world.

It only remains necessary to offer a few brief remarks,

IV. Upon the objections made to some particular arguments, by which the sameness of the Jewish and Christian church is shewn.

1. It has been argued, that "if the Abrahamic covenant did not promise salvation to those who believed and obeyed

\*The term *new* is applied in much the same way to the law of love by our Lord and the Apostle John: John xiii. 34, and 1 John ii. 7, 8. In these places, as well as in the passages under discussion, Schleusner renders it "excellent,"—"præstans, eximius, perfectus, excellens." See under term *καλός*.

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it in the Jewish church, there was no salvation promised to that church at all."\* It is asked in reply, "Was there then no way of salvation but by the covenant of Abraham?"† We answer with confidence, "None, from the moment that covenant was ratified." Prior to that covenant, the way of salvation was identically the same as under it, viz., by faith in the promised Redeemer; but when once the gracious promise of salvation through him was solemnly confirmed by covenant to Abraham and his believing children, from that moment salvation was imparted to his descendants through the medium of that covenant, and that alone. It is therefore true, as above asserted, that if the Abrahamic covenant did not promise salvation to those who believed and obeyed it in the Jewish church, there was no salvation promised to that church at all.

2. It is argued, that circumcision was the "sign and seal of spiritual and eternal blessings, and therefore not likely to be appended to a covenant that only promised temporal blessings."‡ In reply, it is said, that circumcision "was a seal which respected spiritual things as regards Abraham, because it confirmed the fact of his faith; and whenever repeated, it was a token that, on account of Abraham's faith, God had made the promise that the Israelites should possess Canaan."§ A more confused and unscriptural account of the matter could hardly be given. Circumcision, says our opponent, "confirmed the fact of Abraham's faith." St. Paul says it confirmed the fact of his *justification*; it was "a seal of the righteousness," or justification, which he had obtained through faith. Again, our opponent says, "When repeated, it was a token that on account of Abraham's faith God had made the

\*Mr. Elder's letters, p. 8.

†Mr. Elder's Letters, p. 9.

‡Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 77.

§Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 78.



promise that the Israelites should inherit Canaan." The Scripture asserts nothing of the kind, but evidently implies, that circumcision was to be to Abraham's believing children what it was to himself, a seal of the righteousness or justification to be obtained through faith.\* As to the idea that "it could never again be said of any other man, as of Abraham, that circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had before he was circumcised, because all his descendants were to be circumcised at eight days old," it could not, if true, affect the main question about the design and significance of the rite. But it is lamentably incorrect in point of fact, for the whole generation of adult Israelites, who entered the land of Canaan, were circumcised at an adult age, and, for fifteen centuries afterwards, all the believing Gentiles, who were admitted to the covenant by this rite, received it as adults. Upon the whole, we must declare, that the attempt to destroy the force of the argument, derived from the fact that "circumcision was a sign and seal of spiritual and eternal blessings" is an entire failure. It has involved the subject in obscurity, but has not answered the argument.

3. It is urged, in proof of the Abrahamic covenant being the covenant of grace, that it "constituted Abraham the father of all believers."† All that is said in reply, about the thing promised in that covenant being a type of the Christian church, and about faith not being required as a test of membership in the Jewish church, has been already answered. In regard to the assertion, that "by baptizing infants, we make Abraham the father of those concerning whom faith cannot be predicated,"‡ it is merely requisite to remark, that if we do so, it is only what the members of the Jewish church had been doing,

\*Rom. iv. 12. †Mr. E's Let p. 10. ‡Mr. C's Pamph. p. 78.

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with the explicit warrant of God, for many centuries before Christian baptism was instituted. If baptizing infants renders Abraham the father of those who cannot believe, circumcising them did it likewise. But this was done with the full sanction of God, therefore we are only doing in this case, what we know that God approves of. We cannot therefore admit this to be a valid objection against our practice, much less against the truth we are at present vindicating, viz., the identity of the Abrahamic and Christian covenant.

It has been inferred that the Abrahamic covenant is the covenant of grace, from its promises.\* Here our opponent fully admits, that the same religious promises, viz., the promise of a Redeemer, of a resurrection, and eternal life, were equally given to the Jewish and the Christian church; but he denies that this shews the continuance of the covenant of circumcision.† We must maintain, however, that this fact does unquestionably prove the continuance of the Abrahamic covenant. For what was that covenant? It was, as we have already shewn, the solemn confirmation of these very promises. The continuation of these promises, therefore, does clearly prove the permanency of the covenant by which they were ratified, confirmed, and imparted to the church of God. It is not, as our opponent thinks, the mere fulfilment of types that they shew, but the lasting and immutable character of the covenant which embraces them.

Hitherto we have considered the arguments that go to prove that the Abrahamic covenant was the covenant of grace; the following ones have been advanced to shew more particularly the sameness of the Jewish and Christian church.

1. The first is taken from the xi. of Romans, where

\*Mr. E's. Letters, p. 10.

†Mr. C. p. 79.

St. Paul speaks of the church of God, under the figure of an olive tree, into which the believing Gentiles were grafted, and from whence the unbelieving Jews were broken off. Here, as Mr. Scott has justly observed, the Apostle's reasoning strongly evinces the oneness of the visible church under every dispensation. For he speaks of the tree itself as permanent, together with its root, i. e. the Patriarchs, especially Abraham; and of its fatness, i. e. the precious promises and privileges enjoyed by those who held communion with it. To this it is replied, that "the believing Jews only are intended as the olive tree."\* But we think it would be more correct to say they were branches of it. Their brethren, who were broken off from it, are termed branches; and these very believers are warned, that unless they adhere to it by faith, they too, as branches, will be severed from it. But from what could they be severed? From themselves? No, but from all connection with the privileges, promises, and ancient members of God's church; in other words, from the olive tree, its root, and its fatness. Surely it must be hard to close the eyes against the evident proof afforded by this language of the oneness of the Jewish and Christian church.

2. The next argument employed to shew this is, that the qualification for church-membership has been the same in both, viz. a profession of faith.† The reply to this is grounded upon a twofold error, viz. that faith was not at all demanded, either for admission to, or continuance in, the Jewish church, but that the actual profession of a true faith is essential to both in the Christian church.‡ Here, we repeat, are two glaring errors.

What proof is there, we ask, of the first of these positions, viz., that faith was not demanded for *admission to*,

\*Mr. C. p. 79. †Mr. E's. Letters, p. 13. ‡Mr. C. p. 81

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or *continuance* in the Jewish church? We are referred to Gen. xvii. 23—25, and triumphantly asked, "Were these circumcised dependants of Abraham true believers? Had Ishmael faith? Did faith produce the contumelious conduct, for which he was afterwards ejected from his father's roof?" This is strange reasoning indeed! Suppose in reply we should turn to 1st Corinthians, iii. 3, and again, to chapter xi. 21, and ask, "Were all these baptized professors of Christianity, true believers? Did faith produce their envyings, strifes, and divisions? Did faith lead them to convert the Lord's supper into a scene of revelling and drunkenness?" Would this reasoning, we ask, prove that faith was not demanded of the members of the Christian church? Undoubtedly the train of facts, in the one case, is just as conclusive against the demand of faith, as in the other.

Equally false is the idea, that faith was not demanded for a *continuance* in the Jewish church. It was demanded of every member of that church, by the whole tenor of their law and worship. And the open profession was just as requisite for the continued enjoyment of church privileges, as under the gospel. The actual possession of it, indeed, could not be enforced by man, nor can it under the Christian dispensation; but the open denial of it was punishable then, as much as it is now, and in truth to a much greater extent.\* Nor are those solemn instances to be overlooked in which God himself immediately interposed as an avenger of unbelief. What stronger proof can be required that he demanded faith of the members of the Jewish church, than the destruction in the wilderness of a whole generation, because of their unbelief,† and the final dispersion and excision from church privi-

\*Lev. xx. 2, 27. Ibid. xxiv. 14. Deut. xiii. 10. Ibid. xvii. 5.  
 Ibid. xxi. 21. Josh. vii. 25. †See Heb. iv. 2—7.

leges of the whole Jewish nation, for the same cause?\*

9. It is argued that salvation was to be found in the Jewish as well as in the Christian church.† The answer given to this is, that "though salvation might be found in the Jewish church, that church was not by its constitution composed of such as gave evidence of real religion; whereas the Christian church was from the first composed of the saved."‡ But all this is the mere work of fancy, not the representation of fact. There is good reason to think that Abraham's family, which formed the beginning of the visible church, were in general among the truly saved. If there were exceptions among the members of it, so there were among the members of the primitive Christian church. Simon Magus is quite as obvious a one, as Ishmael, or any other descendant of Abraham. The truth is, that the Jewish and Christian church were in this respect similar. The latter, indeed, has more light and higher advantages, but both by their constitution had the same design and the same tendency; they were both intended to be "schools in which the children of God should be born, nursed, and trained up for an everlasting inheritance."

4. A fourth argument for the sameness of the church under the two dispensations is, that "the same promises that were given to the Jewish church, are applied to the Christian church."§ The reply given to this is, that "all promises to literal Israel, are now fully fulfilled to spiritual Israel."|| This opinion, however, we have already shewn to be founded on a mistaken view of the nature, and relation of the Christian church. Nothing further, consequently, need here be added upon the subject.

5. 6. The fifth and sixth arguments are, that the same cha-

\*Rom. xi. 20.

†Mr. E's Letters, p. 14.

‡Mr. C. p. 81.

§Mr. E's Letters, p. 14.

||Mr. C. p. 81.

the same cause? We find in the answer that the answer might be found in its constitution; real religion; the first composition of fan- is good reason ned the begin- al among the ong the mem- ers of the pri- is quite as ob- dant of Abra- christian church leed, has more their constitu- endency; they h the children up for an ever-

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Mr. C. p. 81. 81.

racter and same employment belong to the citizens of Zion, under both dispensations.\* We class these together, because the same answer is given to both, viz. that "it ought to be so, but was not really so, under the Jewish, whereas it is under the Christian."† We look upon this view of the case, as we have already stated more than once, as utterly at variance with Scripture and fact. Piety, under the Christian economy, may be more prevalent than under the Jewish; but as to the idea that it belongs exclusively to the Christian dispensation, or that repentance, regeneration and faith, were not as unequivocally demanded under the Jewish, and precisely for the same ends, we reject it as having no foundation in truth.

7. It is demanded, "if the church under the Old and New Testament be not one, when or how did the Apostles leave the one and enter the other?"‡ The answer is, "when they believed in Christ, they manifested that they were the true children of Abraham in the higher, that is, the spiritual sense. Hence they, with other similar disciples of Jesus, formed the Christian church."§ But surely, if by believing they only *manifested* that they were Abraham's children in the spiritual sense, they must have been his spiritual children, and consequently members of the true spiritual church, before they believed, i. e. according to our opponent's view, before the Christian church was formed. And if faith in Christ is the evidence of being the spiritual children of Abraham, then old Simeon, who possessed this faith before the Apostles or John the Baptist, then David and the Prophets, and Abraham himself, must have been members of the true spiritual church of God; so that after all it comes to this,

\*Mr. E's. Let. p. 15, 16.

†Mr. E's. Letters, p. 17.

‡Mr. C. p. 81, 82.

§Mr. C. p. 82.

that the spiritual church, which, after the day of Pentecost was styled the Christian church, had been in existence from the days of Abraham, and was essentially the same church as that of which every true believer is a member, at the present hour.

8. "The prophecies shew that the Jewish church was not to be destroyed and a new one formed."\* The answer given is, that "the Jews who believed were not to be destroyed, but their ceremonies were."† This however, is no answer at all. The question is, Were the believing Jews to be destroyed *as a church*? Were they to be taken out of one church and put into another, or were they, while living under two distinct dispensations, still members of one and the same spiritual church?—This the prophecies appear most distinctly to imply. The argument therefore, which has been drawn from these, remains, as in truth the whole chain of proofs that have now passed under review remains, unshaken by any reply that our opponent has given. The aid of these particular arguments, indeed, is not necessary to prove, what in the very nature of things must be true, viz, the sameness of the church of God under every dispensation; yet it is impossible to consider carefully the replies that have been made to them, and not feel more forcibly than before, that the cause they are advanced to undermine is the invincible cause of truth.

\*Mr. E's. Letters, p. 17. †Mr. C. p. 82.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

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ON THE OBJECTIONS URGED AGAINST THE ARGUMENTS DRAWN FROM THE BAPTISM OF HOUSEHOLDS, AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE APOSTLE IN REGARD TO CHILDREN;—1 COR. VII. 14.

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I. THE objections against the argument drawn from the baptism of households.

It is a source of sincere regret, on entering upon this topic, to find the argument which Pædobaptists employ entirely misrepresented. In order to combat it with less difficulty, it is placed in this absurd point of view. "Households, they argue, very frequently contain infants, therefore, if households were baptized, we may be sure, they in-



form us, that there were infants among those who were baptized likewise.”\* Now this is an unfair statement of the case. No man of common sense ever reasoned thus upon the subject. Pædobaptists do not infer that infants were certainly baptized, because households frequently contain them; but they do infer, that it is highly probable, from the known fact of its being the Apostolic practice to baptize households, that infants were baptized, because households generally contain infants; and it can hardly be credited, that, in all the instances where they baptized households, not one family should have happened to contain them.

But we are next told, that even if we were sure there were infants in these families, we ought to conclude they were not baptized, because they are “incapable of being included in a commission which ran, ‘teach all nations baptizing them;’ incapable of instruction, and all the various mental and religious affections connected every where throughout Scripture with the ordinance of Baptism.†”—We have already shewn that infants are not incapable of being included in the commission which directed the Apostles to disciple all nations, baptizing them;‡ we therefore pass this part of the argument as needing no further comment. And, as to their being incapable of instruction or religious affections, we are quite satisfied that this affords no valid argument against their baptism. We find that these very religious affections, are, in the language of Scripture, just as closely connected with salvation as with baptism.§ Shall we then conclude that infants cannot be saved because they do not possess them? Shall we conclude that all infants are damned, because they cannot “believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,” or be-

\*Mr. C's. pamphlet, p. 49. †Ibid. ‡Chap. vi.  
§Mark xvi. 16. Acts xvi. 31. Acts iii. 19.

cause they cannot "repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out?" Our Baptist opponents say, No, by no means, these declarations do not apply to their case. They say well;—it would be absurd and unjust to argue from these passages that they cannot be saved; and just as unreasonable, we think, to argue from similar ones, that they cannot be baptized. The same candour which admits them to salvation in the one case, notwithstanding these demands of faith and repentance, ought, in the other, to admit them to baptism, notwithstanding the requirements which are made of adults in approaching this ordinance. Unquestionably, the mere assertion that households were baptized would not prove that infants were admitted to this ordinance, if good and sufficient evidence could be brought to shew that God disapproved of their being so; but if the evidence, which the opponents of Infant Baptism advance, has really nothing to do with the case, and if, on the other hand, we have unimpeachable testimony that God is willing to regard infants as members of his church, and admit them to the initiatory sacrament of it; if we find that, for nearly two thousand years before the coming of Christ, they enjoyed this right, and for fifteen hundred afterwards; if we find that Christ was willing they should be brought to him, and that, when his messengers went forth to disciple all nations, baptizing them, they did, as Abraham had done, dedicate whole households to God;—shall we not infer, upon good and scriptural grounds, that in admitting believers to the blessed privilege of baptism, they did not exclude from it their offspring, who as the seed of the faithful were beloved for their fathers' sakes?

It is urged however that "several, if not all, of the very households which are said to have been baptized, are also said to have possessed such emotions as infants cannot

have."—The Jailor's house "rejoiced;"—that of Stephanas "addicted themselves to the ministry;"—Lydia's "were comforted,"—and these things are supposed to have been recorded with an express view "to convict Pædobaptists of their error."\*

To try the soundness or fallacy of this argument, we shall propose a single test. We have mention made in the New Testament of at least eight different families or households, besides those of the Jailor, Lydia, and Stephanas, to all of which such acts and emotions are attributed as infants are incapable of.† We have then eleven families or households mentioned in this way, and consequently, as our opponent reasons, not an infant was to be found in any of them. Is this probable? Is it to be credited? Is it not so improbable as to render worthless the argument that leads to such a conclusion? We think so, and, what is more to the point, we believe that in the present instance our opponent thinks so too; for he has himself referred to five of the instances mentioned above as illustrative—of what?—of the fact that these identical expressions might be used in reference to families containing infants, and yet not be intended to apply to them.‡ How then, we ask, can such expressions be appealed to in the spirit of candour, as proofs that there were no infants in the families of the Jailor, Lydia, and Stephanas?

But possibly our opponent will say, I do not adduce them as proofs that there were no infants in these families; I freely grant that they might have contained infants notwithstanding the use of these expressions: all I contend for is, that they shew "that the baptized persons in these families consisted not of infants, but of persons ca-

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 50. †Phil. iv. 22. Rom. xvi. 10. 11. 2 Tim. iv. 19. John iv. 53. Acts x. 2. Col. iv. 15.

‡See Mr. C's pamphlet, p. 49.

pable of religious affections." This, though it concedes something, is still contending for too much; for it will not follow that because the term *family* is used in a limited sense, when something is predicated of it which in the nature of things can only apply to *part of it*, therefore it must be understood in a limited sense when a different thing is predicated of it, which is capable of applying to *the whole of it*. If, speaking of an Italian family which contained both infants and adults, I were to say, "that family speak Latin fluently," the term *family* would be used in a *limited* sense; the term would be, as logicians say, undistributed, and every one would immediately understand this to be the case by the dictates of common sense, because every one knows that infants cannot speak Latin fluently. If again, when speaking of the same family, I were to say, "that family is of high extraction," I should use the term *family* to include the whole, both infants and adults, and every person would as readily perceive that I did so, from the dictates of common sense; they would instantly see that in the thing predicated there was nothing to limit the term *family* to the meaning of adult members. And they would naturally come to the same conclusion in every instance where the asserted, or some previously known, circumstance did not necessarily suggest such a limitation. But this is precisely the case, when we speak of a family being *baptized*; there is nothing in the thing asserted which is applicable only to the case of adults, as we have repeatedly shown; we are fully justified then, by the admitted principles of interpretation, in applying such an expression to the whole family, infants as well as adults. Unless, therefore, the use of the terms "believed," "rejoiced," "were comforted," &c. in reference to the families of the Jailor, Lydia and Stephanas, proves that no infants were contained in them, (and our opponent grants that it

does not prove this) it cannot shew that the baptisms of these families were the baptisms of their adult members alone. It leaves us in fact at perfect liberty to understand the term *household* or *family*, as a variety of other reasons suggest the propriety of doing, without any limitation whatever.

Thus far, however, we have reasoned the case upon our opponent's own view of it, upon the supposition that these religious affections are actually attributed to those families under the circumstances he supposes; but we do *not* grant this to be the fact; we do not admit it to be true that all the households, which are said to have been baptized, are also said to have possessed such emotions, as infants are incapable of.

Where, for instance, is the proof of this in the case of Lydia's family? We are referred to Acts xvi. 40, where the Apostles are said to have "comforted the brethren" before they departed from Philippi. But what evidence is there, we ask, that these brethren were the members of Lydia's family? Is it necessary to suppose, that all the members of the church of Philippi were comprised in Lydia's household? Paul and Silas were "certain days" at Philippi before the conversion of Lydia.\* After that event they were there "many days," shewing the way of salvation to that people;† they were pointed out as "the servants of the Most High God," by the damsel possessed with the spirit of divination; they publicly wrought a miracle upon her; a tumult was raised in consequence; they were dragged to the market-place, beaten and imprisoned. Are we to suppose that all this took place, and so much time elapsed, without any further conversion than that of Lydia, and this in a populous city, to which the Apostles were

\*Acts xvi. 12.

†Ibid v. 18.

specially directed by heaven, and where, from the Epistle to the Philippians it appears, they established a flourishing church? Had it been the members of Lydia's family whom the Apostles saw and comforted, we might have expected a different form of expression in v. 40. The language of it would have been "the brethren there," or "the brethren, or church in her house," but as it stands, it evidently conveys the idea, that the brethren referred to were not the members of Lydia's family.

"The only conjecture," our opponent thinks, "that weighs at all against the idea of their being Lydia's family is, that they were Luke the historian and the other travelling companions of Paul and Silas."\* Here however we differ from him. We think it an equally probable conjecture, that they were the members of the Philippian church, who had now been converted through the ministry of these Apostles. And yet the supposition that they were St. Luke and the other travelling companions of the Apostle is infinitely preferable to the opinion that they were Lydia's household. As to the idea that the language of the passage makes against this conjecture, because it was suited to persons who were left behind, it is evidently a mistaken inference, for the fact is that St. Luke, and perhaps others, were left behind on this occasion.† The very circumstance therefore which is appealed to, to shew that these were not the brethren who were comforted, affords,

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 51.

†St. Luke, in describing the departure of the Apostle, v. 40, employs the third person plural (ἐξήλθον), thus shewing that he was not one of those who left Philippi in company with them; for on such occasions he uses a different form of expression. See, for example, the marked use of the first person in other parts of this very chapter, as in verses 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17.

on the contrary, *some ground* to conclude that they were the persons alluded to.

We have, then, in the case of Lydia's family, at least, one example of a household baptized, to which the Scripture has attributed no such emotions as infants are incapable of. But great pains are taken by our opponents to provide, in some way or other, a family of adults for Lydia. If the allusion to the brethren who were comforted does not prove it, they think that they can shew she was a "travelling merchant," and therefore must have had a retinue of subordinate agents, or at least must have had some parents, servants, or older children to take care of her infants, if she had any.\* Well, this may be ingenious, but it is all conjecture. We have no scriptural authority for such assertions. It certainly does not follow, that Lydia was a travelling merchant, because she was a native of Thyatira, and at present a seller of purple at Philippi. It would be rather strange to call a large portion of the merchants of St. John or Halifax travelling merchants, because they happened to be natives of England, Ireland and Scotland. In truth, there is not a hint in Scripture, not a shadow of evidence to shew that Lydia's family was composed of adults, and it is a reasonable ground for questioning the fact of their being so, that nothing whatever is said, as in other cases of their conversion prior to their baptism.

The author of the pamphlet under review expresses surprise at a suggestion of this kind. "Is not," he asks, "the baptism of the adults in her family recorded sufficiently in the words that mention that of her household?"† But this is a strange reply to a question about the conversion of these adults‡ The argument to be considered is

\*Mr C.'s pamphlet, page 52.

†Ibid, p. 51.

‡See, at the same place, the question he is replying to.

this;—If the baptized in Lydia's house were adults, they must have been converted to the Christian faith before their baptism. But as their conversions are nowhere recorded, it is improbable that they ever took place, and, by consequence, improbable that the baptized in her house were adults. The conversion of Lydia is particularly recorded. "The Lord," we are told, "opened her heart, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."\* But surely the conversion of a whole family of agents, dependants, relatives, and servants, is a much more remarkable, more unusual occurrence, and, in the same proportion, more likely to be recorded. Yet the scriptural account affords no hint or suggestion of the kind. One reason alone is suggested why Lydia and her household were baptized, viz. the fact that she herself had embraced the Christian faith. But if all her family were believers as well as herself, might we not have expected some intimation of the circumstance in connexion with their baptism? The same exclusive reference to herself is observable in her own language, after the baptism of herself and household. "If" she says, "ye have judged *me* to be faithful to the Lord, come into *my* house, and abide there."† Had her family consisted of adult believers, the terms of the invitation would have been, "If ye have judged *us* to be faithful," &c. Such language would have been more natural, and the motive stronger to induce the Apostles to comply with her request. The account, then, of the baptism of this family, unquestionably favours the idea that the members of it were not the adult dependants or relatives of Lydia. It is her own adoption of the Christian faith that is suggested as a reason for the baptism of her household, and of whomsoever that household

\*Acts xvi. 14

†Verse 15.



was composed, that identical principle is the warrant for Infant Baptism.

Equally fruitless is the attempt to prove that the family of Stephanas must have been all adults at the time of their baptism. The argument is this, "The family are said, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, to have addicted themselves to ministering to the saints; but the Epistle was written at no great distance of time from their baptism, therefore the members of this family must have been all adults at that time."\* We have already shewn, and that upon the authority of our opponent himself, that such assertions as this respecting a family or household do not prove there were no infants in it at the time. But we may also remark that the Epistle containing this statement was probably written seven or eight years after the church was planted in Achaia. But the family of Stephanas was among the first-fruits of that church. These therefore, who were infants in it at the time of their baptism, were now seven or eight years old, and the elder children would have attained maturity. Surely of such a family it might be said, they had devoted themselves to ministering to the wants of God's people. There can be no necessity of supposing it did not contain a child that was under age, because such a declaration is made in regard to it.

There is, when the subject is fairly considered, no reason whatever to conclude that any one of the families named as baptized was destitute of infants. Much less is there ground to think that all of them were so. The probabilities are certainly ten to one, that some of them at least contained young children, and that, proceeding upon the same system as Abraham and the Jewish nation had ever done, the Apostle dedicated them to God, in bap-

\*See Mr. C's. pamphlet, pages 17 & 53.

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tism, when their parents embraced the faith, and submitted to this rite. All this reasoning, however, about the particular circumstances of these three families, is in some measure superfluous; for, prove what you will in regard to them, it cannot exclude infants from the multitude of other households and families, whom the Apostles must have baptized in the course of their ministry. Whoever reads the account of these household baptisms with attention and candour must see that they are mentioned, not as *exceptions to*, but *examples* of the general practice of the Apostles. They are only a few specimens of what the Apostles ordinarily did under similar circumstances. It was their established practice, in baptizing the heads of families, to include their households, and had it consisted with the brevity of the sacred narrative, to specify every instance of it, we should probably have the account, not of three, but of three hundred households which were thus baptized. Now is it credible, that in every instance of this kind that occurred in the ministry of the Apostles, there never happened to be a single infant in the family? No reasonable mind can admit such an idea. It is in vain, then, to endeavour to weaken the argument derivable from those family baptisms, by the fruitless attempt to exclude infants from them, for it would still be the conviction of those who carefully weigh the subject, that the Apostles baptized hundreds of families that did contain them, and included the offspring with the parents in the administration of this ordinance.

II. The language of the Apostle in regard to children, 1 Cor. vii. 14.

It has been brought as a charge against Pædobaptist writers, that they are not unanimous in their sentiments upon the subject under discussion; that they differ in their mode of interpreting the several texts that are advanced

in support of their views, and even vary in their opinion about the grounds of infant baptism.\* Their opponents, however, should be careful in advancing a charge of this description, until they set a better example of unanimity of sentiment themselves. They certainly appear as yet to feel that it is hard to discover any fixed and settled interpretation of some of the texts that enter into this important discussion. The well known passage in 1 Cor. vii. furnishes an illustration of this remark. How has this passage generally been understood by Antipædobaptist writers? Not, certainly, as our opponent in the present instance understands it. He seems to have discovered that the usual interpretation adopted by Baptist writers was untenable, and to have substituted a more refined, though not less objectionable one, in its place. Baptist authors, in general, understand this text as referring to the legitimacy of the children. Dr. Gill, for example, expresses his views of it in very explicit terms. "As the parents," he says, "are lawfully married, the children born of them are, in a civil and legal sense, holy, that is, legitimate." But this learned Baptist seems to have fallen into the error which is charged upon Pædobaptist writers; to have

\*See Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 179, where this charge is urged, in a note quoted from the Scripture Guide; a note replete with misrepresentations of the grossest kind. Could not the compiler of that note discriminate between the origin of a particular rite, and the warrant for administering it to a particular class of persons? Could he not distinguish, also, between the divine authority for administering it, and the terms or conditions of doing so? Surely a little reflection would have saved him from the blunder of representing what learned Pædobaptists have said upon these various topics, as so many different opinions about the grounds of Infant Baptism. A little better acquaintance, also, with the sentiments of such men as Wall, Hammond, and others referred to in that note, would probably have led him to pause, as to the statement he has there given.

forgotten "that there are illegitimate children in God's sight, as well as man's."\* Such is the view taken by the author of the pamphlet before us. The term "sanctified," he says, means, "approved by the law of God,"† when used in reference to the parents and when used in reference to the children. The passage, then, in 1 Corinthians, explained upon his principles would stand thus:—

The unbelieving husband is rendered "approved by the law of God" by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is rendered "approved by the law of God" by the believing husband, otherwise were your children "disapproved by the law of God," but now, on the contrary, they are "approved as born in relation to that marriage-bond which he sanctions."‡

This interpretation lies exposed to the same objections as that of Dr. Gill, and to some additional ones peculiar to itself. One serious objection to it is, that, like the former, it affixes to the terms *αγιος* and *αγιαζω*, a sense which is wholly unwarranted. Neither in Scripture, nor in classical authors, does the term *αγιος*, mean "approved by the law of God," nor the verb *αγιαζω*, "to render approved by the law of God," but in both the radical idea is that of "setting apart, or consecrating a thing to some sacred use or purpose."§

Another objection to this construction of the passage, and one which must be felt as having great weight, is, that it supposes the circumstance of a husband's or a wife's believing can give a sanction in God's sight to a marriage which would otherwise be unlawful. Let this point be

\*See Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 45.

†Ibid.

‡Ibid.

§ In all the New Testament, though the word 'holy' is used above five hundred times, yet it never once signifies legitimacy, but is always used for a state of separation to God." Burdett in loco.

well considered. The assertion is, that "the unbelieving husband is rendered approved by the law of God, and that in reference to the marriage-bond, *by the believing wife.*"\* Would then the "marriage-bond" have been disapproved by the law of God, if neither party had been a believer? And if it would, could the circumstance of one's believing render it approved? We are assured that neither the one nor the other of these demands can be answered in the affirmative. No law of God prohibits the marriage of two persons who are unbelievers, and no principle contained in that law authorizes us to think, that the faith of a wife or husband could render the marriage-bond with a heathen more lawful than it was before. Such a construction, then, of this important passage, as would compel us to adopt these false positions, must be untenable.

But further—This construction of the passage proceeds upon another supposition, equally opposed to the principles of just reasoning. It supposes the circumstance of God's approving the continuance of the marriage-bond between the believer and the unbeliever, to be proved *by his known approbation of their children, as lawfully born.*† But how was this latter circumstance to be known?‡ How did it become a subject of notoriety that God ap-

\*The author of the Pamphlet under review, does not consider the preposition "by" to mean, "with respect to" in the different members of this passage, as some critics have done, but retains the usual interpretation "by", thus making the faith of the believing party instrumental in sanctifying the unbeliever. See his pamphlet, p. 44.

†"He brings it as a thing known and admitted by those whom he addresses in order to add strength to his preceding argument."—Mr. C's. pamphlet, p. 46.

‡The only account our author gives of this is, that "it had never come into their minds that their children were illegitimate." See his pamphlet, p. 46. A slender basis, it must be confessed, for the weighty conclusions that were to rest upon it!!

"the unbelieving of God, and that *believing wife*."\* been disapproved been a believer? of one's believing at neither the one wered in the affir-riage of two per-e contained in that of a wife or hus- h a heathen more ruption, then, of us to adopt these

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proved of the children as lawfully born? The legitimacy of the children in the eyes of God could only be inferred from the legality of the parents' union. It was clearly the less obvious truth, and entirely dependent upon the views men entertained of the other. They who believed the parents to be lawfully united, would believe the children to be lawfully born, and they who regarded the parents as unlawfully united, would entertain the same views in relation to the children. But this clearly proves that this interpretation cannot be the true one, for St. Paul evidently supposes there was something peculiar in the case of the children, which rendered their "holiness" more known and obvious than the holiness of the parents. It comes then simply to this;—either St. Paul was mistaken in his view of this subject, and has urged that as a proof of his position which first required to be proved itself, or this interpretation of our opponent must be relinquished as untenable.

Mark too the argument, by which this construction of the passage is attempted to be supported. It is simply this—"The general scope of the chapter is to shew the lawfulness of marriage, and the particular scope of that part of it under discussion, to shew the lawfulness of a believer's continuing in the marriage state with an unbeliever; therefore the sanctification of which the Apostle speaks, both in reference to the parents, and their children, must have relation to this main topic, viz. the marriage connexion."\* But here the question arises, what kind of relation must it have to this topic? Must it necessarily mean something of the same kind? Or must it only have that relation to it which always subsists between a just reason and the thing which it proves?

\*Such is the substance of the reasoning on pages 44 & 45 of Mr. C's pamphlet.

Surely the idea, that it must mean something of the same kind or nature as the thing it is brought to prove, is a most extravagant assumption. What if I should fix upon the assertion so often made by Baptist writers, that "infants ought not to be baptized, because they cannot repent;" and endeavour by a reference to the scope of the passage to fix the meaning of the term *repent*. I ought upon the principles of our opponent to argue thus—"The main scope of the passage is the propriety of Infant Baptism; therefore the repentance here spoken of must have relation to this main topic; it must mean something of the same kind. It does not here mean sorrow for sin, or a spiritual change of heart; it can only mean lawfully baptized, for this is the main topic of the passage." Would not a child perceive the fallacy of this reasoning? And must not every person of the smallest reflection see at a glance, that it is precisely this fallacious process, by which the meaning of the terms "noly" and "sanctified" is attempted to be fixed by the author whose sentiments we are opposing?—Let it be granted that these terms have relation to the main scope of the passage. It does not follow from hence that one must mean *lawfully married*, and the other *lawfully begotten*. They may both stand to the main topic in the relation of a reason to a conclusion, and yet stand in much closer relation to the idea of separation from the world, consecration to God, and admission to the privileges of his church.

Unquestionably, whatever difficulties attend this view of the subject, that interpretation is infinitely preferable which assigns this meaning to the term *sanctification*, and which supposes the Apostle to say, "The unbelieving husband is, in a certain sense, set apart and consecrated to God, by his connexion with a believing wife; otherwise, your children would not be thus set apart and consecrated

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to God, which, you know from their baptism, they are." This construction of the passage is perfectly clear and intelligible, and it is powerfully recommended by several considerations which every candid mind must admit to be of weight in this discussion.

In the first place we may remark, that it retains substantially the same meaning to the terms "sanctified," and "holy," in the different parts of the passage where they occur. If, indeed, the meaning of these terms as they occur in this verse were slightly varied, it would be nothing uncommon, and nothing to be objected to, provided both the meanings attributed to them were scriptural. Such a varied use of the same term, and in the same context, is frequent in Scripture. Take, for example, the expression of "dying unto sin," which occurs twice in Komans vi. 10, 11, evidently in a varied, but yet in a scriptural and intelligible sense. But in fact there is no material variation in the sense affixed to the terms under discussion. The same leading idea of consecration to God is retained in both instances, but with a difference in regard to its *degree*, and consequently the extent of its *attendant privileges*.

But it is still more important for us to remark, in support of this interpretation, that it retains not merely the same meaning of the terms in different members of this passage, but, in each instance, it retains the true scriptural meaning of them.

We have in this verse two terms employed, of precisely opposite meaning, which were familiar to the ears of the Jewish people, and especially to one, who, like St. Paul, was deeply versed in their scriptures;—the term "unclean," (*ακαθαρτα*) and the term "holy", or "sanctified," (*αγια*). The first of these terms, according to Schleusner, signifies, "that from which the people of God are requir-



ed to separate themselves." He refers in illustration of this sense to Acts x. 14, 28. He asserts that it is often used to signify "a pagan, an alien from the worship of the true God, or one who does not belong to the people of God, or to the society of Christians." The passage we are considering, he renders, "otherwise your children also would be removed from the society of Christians." In illustration of this use of the term, he refers to 2 Cor. vi. 17.—Wahl accords with him. "If it were otherwise," he says, "it would follow that the children also were not to be considered as belonging to the Christian community."—Lightfoot is of the same opinion. He says that the words *ἀναθαῖτα* and *αἷα*, refer not to legitimacy or illegitimacy, but to the Gentile or Christian state: that the children of Gentiles were by the Jews considered as *ἀναθαῖτα*, "unclean," and the children of the Jews *αἷα*, "holy," and that, in the passage under consideration, the Apostle refers to this well known sense of the word; that his treatment of the subject does not turn on the hinge, whether a child born of parents, one of whom was a Christian and the other a heathen, was a legitimate offspring, but whether he was a Christian offspring.—The same view of the passage is largely expressed by Whitby.

Upon the other term employed in this passage, these authors speak to the same effect. "Now are they holy," they regard as meaning, "now are they considered as belonging to the Christian community." Wahl says, "It is spoken of one who is in any way connected with Christians, and therefore to be reckoned among them." So Calvin, "The children of the Jews, because they were made heirs of the covenant and distinguished from the children of the impious were called a "holy seed,"\* and for the same reason, the children of Christians, even

\*See Ezra, ix. 2, and Isaiah vi. 13.

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when only one of the parents is pious, are accounted ho-  
ly, and, according to the testimony of the Apostle, differ  
from the impure seed of idolaters." Other authors\* of  
note might be quoted to the same effect, but it will be suf-  
ficient to notice one other testimony, that of the pious and  
excellent Dr. Doddridge, who says on the words "now  
are they holy,"—"On the maturest and most impartial con-  
sideration of this text, I must judge it to refer to infant  
baptism." This, I may add, was the view of the passage  
taken by some of the most eminent of the Christian Fa-  
thers. Tertullian, Origen, Augustine and Pelagian, all  
appear to have viewed this text as referring to infant bap-  
tism; while Cyprian, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome, and  
others, without referring to this particular passage, em-  
ploy the term "sanctified," in the same way.†

\*Burkitt in his commentary expresses his view of the passage, in  
the following terms—

"Your children are not seminally unclean like the children of  
heathens, but federally holy. How are they holy? Not with in-  
herent, internal, personal holiness; for the holiest man's child is  
born in sin, and by nature a child of wrath; but with an external,  
relative and federal holiness: they are not common and unclean  
like the children of infidels, but fit to be partakers of the privileges  
of the church, to be admitted into covenant with God, as be-  
longing to his holy people; 'else were your children unclean, but  
now are they holy.' Observe, he does not say, 'else were your chil-  
dren bastards, but now are they legitimate,' as the enemies of in-  
fant baptism, those *duri infantum patres*, would make him speak,  
but 'else were they unclean,' that is, heathen children, not to be  
owned as an holy seed, and therefore not to be admitted into  
covenant with God, as belonging to his holy people."

†The ancient interpretation of the passage was as follows:

"For it has ordinarily come to pass, that an unbelieving hus-  
band has been brought to the faith, and so to baptism by his  
wife: and likewise, an unbelieving wife by her husband. If it  
were not so, and if the wickedness or infidelity of the unbelieving  
party did usually prevail, the children of such would be gene-  
rally kept unbaptized, and so be unclean. But now we see, by

Surely the evidence ought to be powerful indeed, that should induce us to reject an interpretation so strongly supported by the Scriptural use of the terms, and the opinion of such men; more especially, where it accords, as in the present instance, with the scope of the Apostle's reasoning, and gives to the entire passage a harmony and consistency which no other construction can. Upon the view of our opponent, no reason is apparent why it should be a known circumstance to the parents, that their children were holy; but upon this interpretation of it, all is plain. The parents knew that their children were deemed holy, from the fact of their admission to baptism. And from their acknowledged holiness, the Apostle argues the relative holiness of the unbelieving parents, and thence, the leading truth he was desirous to establish, the lawfulness of a continued union between the believing and the unbelieving partner. Upon this system all is plain in the reasoning, and scriptural in the sense of the terms, but upon that of our opponent, the force of the terms, and scriptural use of them, must be disregarded, and the reasoning of the Apostle involved in obscurity. Upon these

"the grace of God, a contrary effect, for they are generally baptized, and so become holy or sanctified."

This was Augustine's view of the passage, and that embraced by several others of the ancients, whose names are given above. Some learned men in modern days have adopted it, urging in favour of it, 1st. That this use of the term "sanctified," has the countenance of Scripture. In the Old Testament, see Exodus xix. 10. Lev. vi. 27. 2. Sam. xi. 4. In the New Testament, see I. Cor. vi. 11. Ephes. v. 26. And of the Christian fathers generally. 2dly. That it preserves more strictly the grammatical construction of the passage. 3dly. That it gives a more consistent sense to the different members of the passage itself, than other interpretation, and better illustrates the subject of the Apostles' remarks, both before and after it, especially at v. 16. It certainly is greatly preferable to any of the interpretations given by Baptist writers.

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grounds then, we reject his interpretation of this passage,  
 and adhere to one, which, as we conceive, is infinitely  
 more sound and scriptural.

## CHAPTER IX.

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### ON THE OBJECTIONS MADE TO THE ARGUMENT DRAWN FROM ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

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AT the commencement of his objections with regard to the historical evidence, our opponent reminds us that "the Bible is the only rule of Christian faith and practice."\* We rejoice to know that it is so, and desire nothing more sincerely than to take it as such, as upon every other point in religion, so especially upon the question of infant baptism; for we are quite satisfied that its testimony, when fairly weighed, is in favour of this ancient and primitive custom. But, while we gladly

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 88.

receive the Bible, as our rule of faith and practice, are we to close our eyes against the value of other testimony, which shows us how those who lived in Apostolic and primitive times understood this rule, and what were the customs and usages which they derived from the inspired messengers of Christ? We think not, and our opponents agree with us in this respect, for they eagerly employ the argument from Ecclesiastical History, whenever it appears in any measure to favour their peculiar views. They cannot, then, reasonably, object to our proceeding in this respect, and indeed it would be the height of absurdity to do so, for it is plain that those ancient believers, who lived upon the borders of the Apostolic times, must have had peculiar advantages for understanding aright what had been the faith and practice of the Apostles themselves.

To weaken the force of their testimony, we are told that "there were false teachers, who even from the first dawn of the gospel, laid the foundation of those sects, whose animosities and disputes produced afterwards such trouble and perplexity in the Christian church".\* The assertion is true, but who must not see, at a glance, that the fact heightens, instead of lowering, the value of the testimony we have adduced? If innovators in Christian doctrine were marked as heretics by the Apostles and their immediate successors; if the tenets of false teachers, instead of being suffered silently to infect the church, were carefully watched, opposed and rejected, by the faithful teachers of the Gospel; if their heresies, instead of calmly making their way into the communities of the orthodox, led to animosities and disputes, to trouble and perplexity in the Christian church, who must not

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, page 89.

discover in this circumstance a proof, that under the gracious care of its founder, the true church was at this period at least, preserved from adopting any essential error? Echard says in regard to it, "The Christian Religion was now spread through the greatest parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, extending from the British Islands, to the farthest Indies; and fixing not only in cities, and populous places, but also in towns and country villages, as Pliny himself testifies. *The Metropolitan cities were all under bishops of the greatest eminency and piety; and the four great cities of the Roman empire, Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, usually styled Apostolical churches, were governed by Apostolical men; viz. Avaristus in Rome, Cerdo in Alexandria, Ignatius in Antioch, and Simeon in Jerusalem. Besides these, we find Publius in Athens, Polycarp in Smyrna, Onesimus in Ephesus, Papias in Hierapolis, with many others of primitive integrity. This was the state of the church in the beginning of the second century, increasing and flourishing after a stupendous manner; but grievously afflicted on one side by the malice of the Jews and Pagans, and the present persecution under this emperor, and no less wounded on the other by the heretics, the Simonians, the Gnosticks, the Menandrians, the Ebionites, the Cerinthians, and the Nicolaitans: yet still it stood, firm as a rock, against all the powers of hell, shining and triumphing in the glories of the utmost purity and piety.*"

Mosheim, however, is appealed to, for the purpose of shewing that "the venerable simplicity of the Christian system was not of long duration;" that the second century was characterized by "the introduction of pious frauds, the new modelling of discipline according to that used in the heathen mysteries, and by the addition of many un-

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necessary rites and ceremonies, the introduction of which was extremely offensive to wise and good men.\*†

Mosheim's authority in regard to the state and discipline of the primitive church is not of the highest order;† but a little attention to the above extracts from his history, will shew how easy it is to deceive and be deceived, by vague quotations of this description. It is true, Mosheim does say, that "the venerable simplicity of the Christian system was not of long duration; its beauty was gradually effaced by the laborious efforts of human learning and the dark subtilties of imaginary science;" but as Mosheim has reference in this passage to the Platonic schools towards the close of this century, and which was occupied with matters of speculation, not with ceremonies, we presume, that such a remark has little bearing upon the question under discussion. Whoever will take the pains to consult Justin Martyr's first Apology, and read with attention his beautiful description of Christian worship and Christian morals, will be convinced, we think, that the venerable simplicity of the Christian system was not destroyed in the middle of the second century. But to this century Mosheim attributes "the introduction of pious frauds." Tertullian mentions an instance of it. An Asiatic presbyter composed a work, and falsely

\*Mr. C's pamphlet, p. 89.

†The author, [Mosheim] learned and pious as he undoubtedly was, either had not studied the works of the primitive fathers of the Christian church with sufficient care, or laboured under some prejudices, from which the most powerful minds are not wholly exempt, that made him refer to learned moderns for the decision of questions which the ancients alone can decide. This, we think, appears most remarkably in the view which he exhibits of the constitution, government and discipline of the primitive church." &c.  
 —Dr. Gleig's *Dissertation on the state of the primitive church.*



ascribed it to St. Paul. But what has an instance of this kind to do with the writings or practice of men who were too wise and too holy to imitate it, as was the case at this period with the leading characters of the Christian church? Speaking of those, Mosheim himself says, "The artifice of Sophists, and the habit of employing pious frauds, had not as yet infected the Christians."<sup>\*</sup> But to this century also, he attributes "the new-modelling of discipline according to that used in the heathen mysteries." Mosheim is speaking exclusively of the form used in excluding heinous offenders from the society of Christians. What has this to do with the credibility of the fathers, or the practice of infant baptism? Yet a remark of Bishop Kay's upon the very paragraph of Mosheim under discussion is worthy of notice. "We have found," he says, "in Tertullian's writings, no confirmation of Mosheim's assertion, that the Christian discipline began, even at that early period, to be modelled upon the form observed in the heathen mysteries."<sup>†</sup> But Mosheim says, "There were added 'many unnecessary rites and ceremonies, the introduction of which was extremely offensive to wise and good men.' He refers in proof of this assertion to Tertullian's tract *De oratione*." There Tertullian enumerates the ceremonies he objects to, viz. "the washing of the hands or body, or putting off the cloak before the commencement of prayer, or sitting down after the conclusion of it." Now is it possible that good men took offence at these trivial innovations, but none at the introduction of infant baptism? Have they given us catalogues of the objectionable ceremonies that began to appear in the Church, but neglected to notice or condemn the alteration, the vast and essential alteration, in regard to one of the principal institutions of Christianity? Where have we any declaration

<sup>\*</sup>Cent. II. part II. C. 3. sect. 8.

<sup>†</sup>Kay's *Eccles. Hist.* p. 380.

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 Eccles. Hist. p. 380.

in their writings that such an alteration was made?  
 Where an account of any discussion that arose in regard  
 to it? Where any hint that it was a novel custom, offen-  
 sive to good men, and injurious to the interests of piety?  
 It will not suffice, in opposition to the clear, decided,  
 uniform testimony of the Christian writers in the second,  
 third and fourth centuries of Christianity, to talk of "the  
 early corruptions of the church, and the impositions of the  
 clergy;" to tell us that "inward spiritual religion was  
 soon confounded with its outward rites, so as to give a  
 sort of saving influence to the latter,"\* and thus lay a  
 foundation for the introduction of infant baptism. Spi-  
 ritual religion, as we have shewn, was as clearly under-  
 stood, as highly valued, and as deeply felt by many who  
 stood forward then to fight the battles of the ancient  
 church, as by many of our modern divines. The writers  
 we have appealed to were not so ignorant of Christianity  
 as to confound together the form and the substance of re-  
 ligion. They had felt in their own souls the power of  
 godliness; they knew the importance of guarding it against  
 every alloy; they were eagle-eyed in marking the intro-  
 duction of error; they were watchmen who slumbered  
 not at their post, workmen who needed not to be ashamed,  
 men of prayer, men of holiness, men of learning and re-  
 search; and can it be believed that under their immediate  
 ministration, in the very churches which they nurtured  
 with their care, watered with their tears, illuminated with  
 their faith, and confirmed with their blood, such a change  
 as that contemplated in the primary sacrament of their  
 religion,—a total change in the qualifications of its reci-  
 pients,—a change which every eye must perceive, every  
 church must adapt itself to, could suddenly, universally,  
 and silently, without rebuke or opposition, or question,

\*Mr. C's pamphlet, p. 90.

or council, or decree, stalk forth and take possession of Christendom? The faith of that man must be large indeed, who can embrace such an opinion. We freely confess ourselves unable to adopt it. We can admit that at an early age the leaver of false doctrine began to work among the professors of Christianity; but we see that it was carefully watched and opposed by the guardians of the orthodox church. We can believe that rites and ceremonies in matters indifferent were multiplied in the second and third centuries, but we never can credit the unsubstantial assertion, that the primary sacrament of Christianity, one of the most sacred institutions of Christ, was, in reference to the recipients of it, and the qualifications for it, entirely changed, by universal consent, while the voices of the very Apostles were still sounding in the ears of the church. It is a grand mistake to imagine that the spirit of the times was favourable to such an innovation as this. The first two centuries were not days of compromise or concession in such matters, on the part of the orthodox church; but days when friends and possessions and life were cheerfully surrendered, in support of the truth which had been once delivered to the saints. The supposition that such men as Cyprian, Origen, Tertullian, Irenæus, or Justin, would have submitted to an innovation of this kind, in base accommodation to heathen or Jewish prejudices, is one which can only spring from want of acquaintance with the character, principles and attainments of those venerable men. In opposing the testimony adduced from them, there is but one legitimate mode, and that is by shewing, if possible, that they have not borne such a testimony. Let us now endeavour to estimate the arguments which our opponent has employed for this end.

Upon the testimonies of Justin and Irenæus, he has

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made no comment. We presume they must have escaped his notice; for whether his immediate opponent had named them or not, it would be hardly fair, in a chapter professing candidly to investigate the evidence of antiquity, to pass them by in silence: especially, as we meet in that chapter the unqualified assertion, that "no unquestionable proof of infants being baptized occurs until the middle of the third century in the time of Cyprian."\* If by unquestionable proof is meant, proof about which no question can be proposed, we fully agree with the author of this remark; for we know of no truth, established upon any testimony, whether human or divine, about which some question or objection has not been raised. But if it is intended we should understand by this expression, proof that is liable to reasonable or just exceptions, we deny the position; we court the investigation of it. We invite our opponents to shew wherein the just exception to it lies. Let them meet the question fairly and fully, and they will find us willing to listen to their statements. But we can never consent to take vague assertions, or conjectures, as a substitute for solid arguments, and facts.

But to some of the witnesses we have brought, our opponent has taken exceptions, viz. Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Austin, and Pelagius. Let us see with what success.

In regard to the testimony of Tertullian, he endeavours to shew, that he does not allude to the baptism of infants at all, but to the baptism of young persons, who were capable of asking to be admitted to this rite, and that he does not even speak of the custom of baptizing them, as established, or prevalent, but as one just beginning to enter the church.\* In direct opposition to these assertions, we

see his pamphlet, p. 91.

maintain that Tertullian speaks of the baptism of infants, who were as yet too young to solicit admission to this rite, and that he speaks of the custom of baptizing these, as an existing practice, without the slightest intimation of its being a novel one; and we further maintain, that what he advised in regard to these infants was merely a delay in cases where danger of death was not apprehended.

Admitting that the criticism of Robinson, as quoted by our opponent, is correct in regard to the term "*infantulus*," that it may be applied not only to infants, but to young children of a more advanced age, what reason is there to think that Tertullian employs the term "*parvulus*" in reference to the latter? The only reason yet assigned for it is built upon a total misconstruction of his words. It is said, he must have alluded to children who could speak, because he represents those who solicited baptism in their behalf as urging the text "Give to every one that asketh."\* But if others applied for baptism, in behalf of these young children, who, we inquire, were the askers? The text would, in that case, have reference to those who solicited baptism in their behalf; and convey no intimation whatever that the children themselves could speak. Let, however, any one, who is versed in Latin, examine Tertullian's words attentively, and he will see, that the applicants on this occasion are not supposed to urge this text with any peculiar reference to the case of children, but as supporting the general position that baptism ought on all occasions to be granted, when applied for without delay, without consideration of the condition or disposition of the parties receiving it. He will further observe that Tertullian is speaking of such little children as "our Lord took up in his arms and blessed," and in regard to whom he said, "suffer little children to come unto me;"

\*Mr. C's. pamphlet, p. 91.

baptism of infants, mission to this rite, tizing these, as an intimation of its tain, that what he s merely a delay t apprehended. son, as quoted by e term "*infantu-* o infants, but to what reason is he term "*parvu-* ly reason yet as- truction of his to children who se who solicited "Give to every l for baptism, in nquire, were the ave reference to alf; and convey themselves could sed in Latin, ex- nd he will see, ot supposed to e to the case of sition that bap- hen applied for e condition or dis- further observe ildren as "our nd in regard to me unto me;"

of such little children as could not yet "understand" the nature of baptism, or "know Christ;" such as were in respect to actual sin, as yet "guiltless;" such as were still incapable of "desiring salvation," and strange to say, who could not even "ask it;" for Tertullian concludes by saying, "They should (or let them) know how to desire salvation, that you may seem to have given to one that asketh?"\* To this clause Mr. Robinson has indeed given, (I shall not say, an ingenious turn, for that will be speaking too favourably of it, but I will say) a most disingenuous translation, which obscures the real sentiments of the author, and tends to conceal the fact, which, however, is otherwise sufficiently evident, that he is speaking of infants in the ordinary acceptation of this term.†

And what does Tertullian imply in regard to the baptism of the infants? Undoubtedly, that the admission of them to baptism was an existing and prevalent custom. Why, if this were not the case, should he enter into labour- ed reasons to urge delay? Why exclaim, "Wherefore do these infants hasten to the remission of sins?" Our opponent, indeed, would have us read his words, "why should they hasten,"‡ as if it were a custom not yet es-

\*See the whole passage as quoted in chapter V. of the present work.

†The words "*nôrint petere salutem*" Mr. R. translates "they just know how to ask salvation," instead of "they ought to know, or let them know how to ask salvation," which is the true rendering. His object was to make it appear that the children of whom Tertullian was speaking, were children of several years of age. See *History of Baptism*, by Robert Robinson, p. 170.

‡This translation is also borrowed from Robinson. We have just seen a subjunctive mood turned into an indicative, to make it appear that these children were older than they really were; and now we have the indicative changed into a subjunctive, to make it appear that they were not presented for baptism! What will not such men do to support a favourite hypothesis!

tablished; but Tertullian's words are, "why do they hasten?" And without some good and sufficient reason, we are not justified in departing from the plain and literal sense of them. The only reason urged for such a departure is this: "If infant baptism had been from the first the practice of the primitive church, Tertullian would not have endeavoured to shake the practice."\* This reason, however, is built upon very false views of Tertullian. It is plain, that in the case of widows and all unmarried persons, Tertullian did attempt to alter the practice of the church, as it had existed from the days of the Apostles; and if in these instances, why not in the case of infants? It is not sufficient to say that in their case, "there was room for counsel,"† because some time must necessarily elapse before it could be ascertained whether they were believers or not. The advice of Tertullian is not, "Let them wait until you have inquired into their faith," but "until they marry, or are confirmed in continence," which might possibly, in many instances, demand a more serious delay, than the time required for infants to learn to speak. The truth is, that, in both instances, the advice of Tertullian was founded upon the same mistake. He thought that sin after baptism was irremissible,† and that on this account it was better to delay it in the case of those who were exposed to great temptations, or whose

\*Mr. C's. pamphlet, p. 93.

†Prior to the adoption of the opinions of Montanus, Tertullian appears to have thought, that all offences might be pardoned *once, and only once* after baptism. (See his *Tract de penitentiâ*, c. 8.) And this opinion appears to have influenced him to advise delay in regard to this rite. After he became a Montanist, he went still further, believing that the guilt of some crimes was altogether irremissible after baptism. "Alia erit quæ veniam consequi possit, in delicto scilicet remissibili; alia quæ consequi nullo modo potest, in delicto scilicet irremissibili."—(De pudicitia, C. 18.)



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(De pudicitia, C.

dispositions were still unknown, rather than run the risk of exposing such persons to irremediable ruin.

But what after all is the advice of Tertullian in reference to infants? Not the rejection of infant baptism in all instances, but merely the delay of it, except in cases of necessity, i. e. where there was danger of a child's dying in infancy. Our opponent, indeed, disputes the genuineness of the clause which indicates this exception; and strange to say, even Wall is appealed to, as having omitted it in quoting the words of Tertullian.\* But let the whole truth be told. Wall does omit the clause, and he tells us why. His edition of Tertullian's writings was that of Rigaltius, who omits the clause. But Wall remarks that Rigaltius was a favourer of Anabaptists, that he had falsely represented other parts of the writings of Tertullian, and that the older editions, which were more worthy of credit contained the clause in question.† Indeed, if we are to look for any consistency in the writings of this father, such an exception, where there was danger of death, is precisely what we might expect to find in the case before us; for it is obvious from other parts of his writings, that he strenuously maintained the necessity of baptism to salvation, and often appealed, in support of this, to our Lord's declaration, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." A striking instance occurs in his *Treatise de Animâ*, where, referring to 1 Cor. vii. 14, he interprets the Apostle's words to mean, that the children of a believing parent were, by the very circumstances of their birth, marked out to holiness and salvation, and then adds, "but the Apostle had a particular object in view when he made the assertion; he wished to prevent the dissolution of marriage in cases

\*See Mr. C's pamphlet, p. 92.

†See Wall's *Hist. of Infant Baptism*, p. 24. Second edition.



in which one of the party was a heathen. Otherwise he would have borne in mind our Lord's declaration, that *unless a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven*, that is, cannot be holy. So that every soul is numbered in Adam, until it is numbered anew in Christ; being, until it is thus numbered anew, unclean, and consequently sinful."

The conclusion, then, to which we arrive, after carefully examining the testimony of this father, is, that he is to be regarded as a witness to the prevailing practice of infant baptism in the third century; although his private opinion, in which he differed from the general sentiment of his church, was in favour of deferring it, in some instances, from *prudential motives*.

To Origen's testimony, it has been objected that no mention is made of infant baptism, in any of his works that have come down in the original Greek; that the passages cited upon this point are from translations, many of which are spurious, and the rest probably interpolated.\*

In reply we remark,

1. That it is going too far to say that "no mention of infant baptism is contained in any of Origen's works, that have come down to us in the original Greek." Wall quotes, as all who have read his history must know, a passage which has been thought to refer to this subject, but which he has forborne to urge, for reasons which he assigns. His candour on this, as on other occasions, must command our respect, but the reasons he gives, we freely confess, appear to us of little weight. Let our readers judge for themselves. Origen is commenting on Matt. xviii. 10, and uses the following words.

"Then again one may inquire, when it is that the an-

\*Mr. C's. pamphlet, p. 93.

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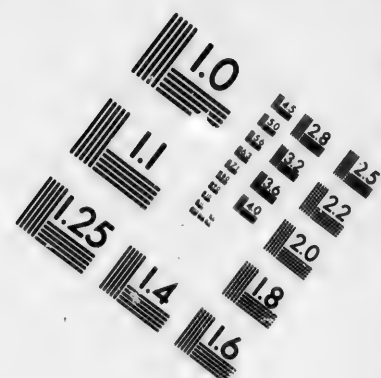
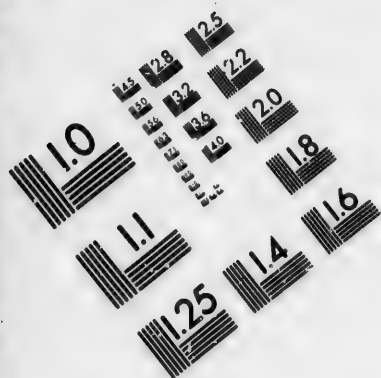
gels here spoken of are set over those little ones shewed  
by our Saviour? Whether they take the care and manage-  
ment of them from the time when they, by the washing of  
regeneration, whereby they were new born, do, as new  
born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, and are  
no longer subject to an evil power? Or from their birth,  
according to the foreknowledge of God, and his predesti-  
nating of them."\*

The only question about this passage, is whether Origen  
is speaking of *infants in age*, or *grown persons who are*  
*like infants in their disposition*. In support of the latter  
view it might be said, that, in the passage itself, he des-  
cribes the time of their baptism, as the time when by the  
washing of regeneration *they desire the sincere milk of the*  
*word*; and afterwards assigns as a reason for supposing  
they are at that time placed under the care of a good an-  
gel, that the time of people's unbelief is under the angels  
of Satan. These reasons are certainly not very powerful.  
It must, we think, strike the mind of a careful readers  
that by "the time of people's unbelief," Origen means  
simply the time that precedes their regeneration, whether  
they are capable or incapable of belief, and that in the  
clause, "they desire the sincere milk of the word," he  
means only to point to an effect of their regeneration,  
without defining the precise period of its being apparent.  
In support of the other view, that they are *infants in age*,  
such infants at least, as Jesus took and put in the midst of

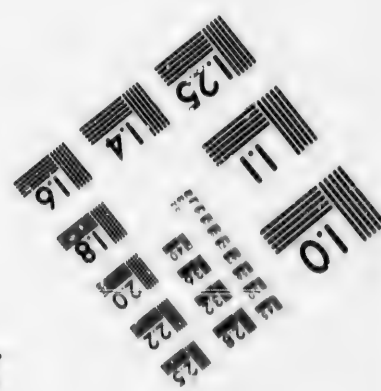
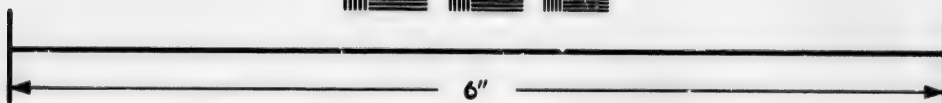
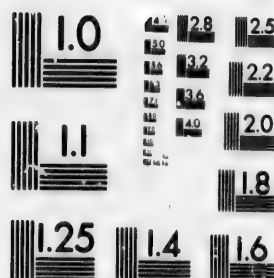
\*Εἶτα πάλιν ζητήσωμεν ἂν τις, ποτε τῶν δεικνυμένων ὑπο τῷ  
Σωτήρος μικρῶν οἱ λεγόμενοι αὐτῶν ἀγγελοὶ προΐστανται; ποταρὸν  
δεξιόμενοι τὴν οἰκονομίαν περὶ αὐτῶν διοικεῖν ἀφ' ἧς διὰ λόγου  
παλιγγενεσίας, ὡς ἐγενήθησαν, ὡς ἀρτιγεννητὰ βρεφὴ τὸ λογικὸν καὶ  
ἀδολογὰ ἐπιποθεῖσι, καὶ μηκέτι ὑποκειμένοι πονηρατίνι δυνάμει;  
ἢ ἀπο γενέσεως, κατὰ τὴν τῷ Θεῷ προγενῶσιν καὶ τὸν προορισμὸν  
αὐτῶν, κ. τ. λ.

Comment on Matt.





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his disciples on that occasion, [whether a year, or two years, or three years old, we undertake not to decide] we have evidence which cannot we think be questioned, the express words of Origen in the passage under review; for he calls them, "*those little ones shewed by our Saviour.*" The term "shewed" (*δεικνυμενον*) appears to refer to our Lord's act in placing before the eyes of his disciples the little children as a specimen of a class, who were thus shewn to be peculiarly dear to God, and fit models for the imitation of his followers. We cannot then, with this passage before us, venture to assert, that no mention is made of infant baptism in any of Origen's works that have come down to us in the original Greek.

2. Nor can we accede to the idea, that credit is not to be given to the passages which are cited upon this point, from the translations of Origen's works; on the contrary, we feel convinced that these passages are worthy of the fullest credence upon the points in question. It is admitted, that many spurious works have been attributed to Origen; but the passages relied upon by Pædobaptists are taken from those which the best critics have allowed to be genuine. St Jerome translated his homilies on St. Luke. Rufinus quotes this translation as the work of Jerome, and Jerome himself refers to it as such, in the catalogue of his own books; the work, therefore, was undoubtedly his; and in regard to it, Wall makes the remark, "St. Hierome changed nothing, but expressed every thing as it was in the original, as he owns himself," and refers to Erasmus who had once regarded this translation as spurious, as compelled to come to this conclusion.\* Now it is from the translation made in the third century, that our first quotation is given. Let it then be shewn that this translation is not genuine, or let it be ad-

\*See Wall's History, pages 28 & 29.

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not to decide] we  
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mitted that Origen attests and approves the practice of infant baptism.

The comments on Romans, and homilies upon Leviticus, from which our second and third quotations are selected, were translated by Rufinus. That these works are genuine, none dispute; the only question relates to their authenticity; whether they give the real views of Origen or not. The truth appears to be this: Rufinus has greatly abridged the comments on Romans, and, throughout the work of translating, has omitted such passages as were opposed to the received doctrine of the church. Origen held many peculiar opinions in regard to the resurrection of the same body, the eternity of hell-torments, the pre-existence of the soul, and the Trinity, and, where he stated these opinions, Rufinus, who admired him, and wished to defend his reputation, has omitted them, or given them a different gloss. But in reference to the question of baptism, Origen held no peculiar opinion. The soundness of his views upon this point was never questioned in the days of Rufinus. His singular opinions were at that very time subjects of warm debate, as among others, so especially between Rufinus and Jerome, his two translators, the one his warm admirer, the other his enemy.\* But in regard to his sentiments upon baptism, no question was ever broached. Rufinus had here no temptation to alter or interpolate. Indeed the simple fact that these two translators, who differed so widely in their sentiments about Origen, agree in this particular, in making him attest in the plainest terms the prevalence of this custom, must be to a reasonable per-

\*Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, reckons up the peculiar opinions of Origen, in number 35; but there is not a hint of any peculiar expression in regard to baptism, or that either his admirers or enemies had ever attributed such to him. See *Wall's His.* p. 29.

son sufficient proof that these passages speak the real sentiments of Origen.

We shall next consider the objections made to the testimonies of Augustine and Pelagius. To weaken the force of these, we are first reminded that the church in their day was overspread with errors. But how does this affect the matter of fact question, as to the prevalence of infant baptism, either at this or any other prior period? If at this period we first began to trace the existence of Pædo-baptism, such a circumstance might lead us to pause. But when we take the evidence, in connexion with that of the previous witnesses adduced, we must see at once how weak such a suggestion is. But the particular testimony which these great men have borne to *their never having heard of any that denied infant baptism*, seems in the eyes of our opponent to be more important. Let us then see how this is obviated. First we are told that no such assertion is made.\* This declaration is truly astonishing. We refer our readers, first, to the passage quoted in our fifth chapter, from St. Augustine's third book of "guilt and forgiveness of sins," where the assertion is made in the plainest terms, and secondly, to the passage quoted in the same chapter, from Pelagius' letter to Innocent, where it is reiterated in terms equally strong. How Dr. Chapin could deny the point we know not. An impartial reader of the words of Pelagius must see, that what he declares, he had never heard of even an impious heretic's affirming is, *that infants ought not to be baptized*. It is to this that he applies the term "impious" in two other parts of the passage; it was *this charge* through the whole context that he was anxious to repudiate; and their "losing the redemption of Christ" is merely pointed to, as a consequence of thus impiously refusing them bap-

\*Mr. C's. pamphlet, p. 94 & 95.



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rism. But our opponent suggests that Pelagius could not possibly have used such language, because he must have heard of Tertullian's case, and that of the Manichees. The true solution of this case is, that neither Pelagius nor Augustine, nor the Christian church in general, ever regarded Tertullian as an opposer of infant baptism. And as to the Manichees, a writer at that period would no more think of classing them among the opposers of infant baptism, than we should the Quakers at the present day.\* When we speak of the opponents of infant baptism, we mean not to designate those who reject all sacraments and external ordinances, but those who reject this particular practice of baptizing *infants*. But after all, of what avail would it be, if it were possible to shew that Pelagius did not make this assertion, if Augustine, a man of equal learning, and greater integrity, unquestionably made it, as we have already shewn that he did? "I do not," he says, "remember to have ever read of any, not only in the Catholic church, but even in any heresy or schism whatever, who maintained that baptism ought to be denied to infants. 'This the church has always professed, always maintained.' Here is the plain declaration of Augustine upon the subject, and this ought to satisfy any candid mind, as to the long-established, and universal practice of the church in this particular.

There are two mistakes in this part of the pamphlet under review, upon which we shall briefly touch. One is, the idea that Augustine in his writings upon this subject, "was eager to establish infant baptism." A greater misconception of the matter could hardly be entertained.

\*In proof of this assertion, we may remark that Augustine does mention a sect called *Selucians*, or *Hermians*, as rejecting water-baptism altogether, and classes them among heretics. [De Har. C. 59.]

Augustine, in text or context, in fact in the whole controversy, evinces no anxiety upon the subject. He every where assumes as unquestionable and unquestioned, that infant baptism was divinely, universally, and immoveably established; and only refers to it as a proof of another point he was anxious to establish, viz. the doctrine of original sin. Another mistaken idea is, that as the words of Pelagius are only transmitted to us by Augustine his opponent, it must lessen the confidence with which we receive them. Upon this point Wall says of Davie who endeavoured in this way to lessen the force of this testimony: "He questioned whether Pelagius's creed, and Cælestius's *Confessio Fidei*, of which I gave copies out of Augustine, be genuine; and, what is worse, says, it may be questioned by my confession. They were authentic pieces sent or given by them in their own defence to the bishops of Rome! No man can suppose, even if he thought St. Austin to be a forger, that he would forge or mis-recite public records kept at Rome."\* This reply to a vague conjecture is amply sufficient. It certainly is in the highest degree improbable, that a man of Augustine's piety and reputation would mis-represent what was a matter of public record, and where every principle of religion and honour would demand the strictest accuracy. We see, then, that all the objections to the testimony of these great men, are, like those we have previously examined, absolutely without foundation.

We turn next to the exception taken to the testimony of Cyprian and the African bishops. One of these is founded upon the question of *Fidus*, and the other upon Cyprian's reply to it.

The question of *Fidus*, we are told, shews that "the

\*Wall's Def. p. 435.

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practice must have been very recent",\* otherwise he could not have doubted about the precise age at which children ought to be baptized. How fallacious is this reasoning! Had the practice of infant baptism prevailed for 1300 years, as at present, instead of 250, as in the days of Cyprian, such a doubt might have arisen with an individual. Similar questions are daily raised as to the circumstantial of both sacraments, but who argues from this, that these institutions are of recent date? At the time of the Reformation it was warmly debated, whether the Lord's Supper should be received, in a kneeling, or a sitting posture; and, at the present moment, a grave discussion is maintained in a neighbouring country, whether wine which contains any portion of alcohol can be lawfully used in that sacrament; but has any one ever had the temerity to infer from these facts, that the sacrament itself was of recent origin?

But a further objection is founded upon Cyprian's answer to Fidus. This letter, which expresses the sentiments of the African bishops, contains, we are told, "childish reasoning," and is therefore not to be relied upon. Now, we have carefully examined, again and again, the whole of this letter, and are compelled to say, that it contains no such evidence of childishness or folly, as should lead us for a moment to question the testimony it bears. It contains some sentiments to which we should not subscribe--some reasons of which we might not admit the force; but it embraces, in conjunction with these, much that is sound and just, and, what is more honourable to its author, much that is pious and lovely in its spirit. In this respect, it presents a very striking contrast to the comments that have sometimes been made upon it.†

\*Mr C's pamphlet, p. 95.

†See for example the miserable jests and contemptuous scoffs of Robinson, upon the contents of this letter; pages 189, 190.

Were it however true, that Cyprian and his colleagues were weak reasoners, it could not possibly affect the question at issue; it is not their wisdom as interpreters, but their integrity as witnesses, that we are concerned with, and this is unimpeachable. They were competent witnesses of the *fact*, that infant baptism prevailed in the Christian church in their day, and, as witnesses of this fact, they have borne a decisive testimony. The letter, which embodies the decision of these prelates, undoubtedly recognizes infant baptism as the established usage of the church at that period. The perfect unanimity they evinced on this occasion, shows that they entertained no doubt whatever about the propriety of the practice, and such a circumstance is utterly irreconcilable with the idea that the custom itself was of recent date, or doubtful authority. Their testimony, therefore, is, as Pædobaptists have always regarded it, a full and complete evidence, that, in the middle of the third century, infant baptism was the established usage of the Christian church.

Unavailing then, of course, must be the attempt to shew that this custom did not generally prevail till long after this period. The evidences already adduced render it in a great measure needless to undertake the refutation of this extraordinary position; still, for the satisfaction of those who wish to understand the arguments on both sides, we shall briefly consider the supposed proofs of this assertion.

The first witness appealed to is Gregory Nazianzen. Gregory, together with his brother and sister, we are told, was not baptized in infancy, and Gregory recommends that the baptism of infants should be deferred until they are three years old.\*

If the first assertion be true, it accounts in some mea-

\*Mr. C.'s pamphlet, p. 96 & 97.

sure for the advice of Gregory, in regard to delaying the baptism of infants, and shews how unlikely it is that men who had been accustomed only to witness adult baptism, would, without precedent or example, introduce Pædobaptism by universal consent into the Christian church. What they had seen, what they themselves had done, that they would be prejudiced in favour of. Through the carelessness of parents, and the lukewarmness of professors, many might be left without baptism in their infancy, when infant baptism was the established custom of the church; but it is not to be credited, that, if this had not been the practice of the church from the beginning, her pastors would have consented universally to introduce it. The case of Gregory's baptism is, however, extremely doubtful, to say the least of it. It remains to be proved that when Gregory was born, his father was a Christian. From a passage in a poem written by Gregory, we should conclude that he was; but from other evidences, which are neither few nor feeble, we should infer that he was not. We know that the conversion of Gregory's father happened in 325: we know that Gregory's own death happened in 389, i. e. 64 years after his father's conversion: but Gregory's biographer, Gregorius Presbyter, represents him as having died very old; and Suidas states his age to have been 90: this would carry back his birth to the year 300, i. e. 25 years before his father was a Christian. No wonder in that case that he was not baptized in infancy. Many circumstances appear to confirm this view of the case. His advancement to the Bishopric of Constantinople was opposed upon the ground of his age, and, eight years before his death, he begged to resign that charge, saying to the bishops present, "Let these my grey hairs prevail with you." Is it probable that he was but 56 years of age, as must have been the case, if he was

born after his father's conversion? Rufinus also describes him as, "*fessâ jam ætate,*" spent with age, which certainly accords better with a man's state at 90, than at 64 years of age. These and other reasons strongly indicate that his birth was long prior to the conversion of his father. Suppose, however, the case was otherwise, that his birth were subsequent to his father's conversion, and yet his baptism neglected, what will it prove? Only that some Christian parents then were like some Christian parents now, too negligent in offering their children for baptism.

But the authority of Gregory's opinion, no less than his example, is appealed to. "Gregory," we are told, "advised that the baptism of infants should be deferred until they were three years old;" and this is quoted to shew that the practice of infant baptism was not a general, or a settled matter. No question, it is supposed, could possibly have arisen upon this subject at that time, if infant baptism had been a settled practice from the first. Here, however, we may repeat what has already been said, in regard to the question proposed by Fidus, that it might have been asked, and answered in the very terms which Gregory employs, though infant baptism had been a settled practice of the church for eighteen hundred, instead of four hundred years.—Indeed when the sentiments of Gregory upon the subject of infant baptism, are fairly weighed, he will be found to be among the decided witnesses in favour of the practice. In his oration concerning baptism, he makes a strong appeal to that class of hearers, who, though favourably impressed in regard to Christianity, still, from some frivolous excuses, delayed their baptism. Warning them against the artifices of their spiritual adversary, which were directed against persons of all ages, he thus addresses them: "Art thou a youth? Fight against pleasures and passions with this

auxiliary strength; enlist thyself in God's army. Art thou old? Let thy grey hairs hasten thee; strengthen thy old age with baptism. *Hast thou an infant child? Let not wickedness have the advantage of time; let him be sanctified from his infancy; let him be dedicated to the Spirit from his cradle.*"\* He then fully enters into the consideration of the several pleas for delay which were used by such persons, and shews the futility of them all, urging the imminent danger of losing the grace and blessing of baptism; but he adds—

"Some may say, suppose this to hold in the case of those that can desire baptism, what say you to those who are as yet infants, and are not in capacity to be sensible either of the grace, or the loss of it? Shall we baptize them too? *Yes, by all means, if any danger make it requisite, for it is better that they be sanctified without their own sense of it, than that they should die unsealed and uninitiated.* And a ground of this to us is circumcision, which was given on the eighth day, and was a typical seal, and was practised on those that had no use of reason: as also the anointing of the door-posts which preserved the first-born by things that have no sense. As for others, I give an opinion, that they should stay three years, or thereabouts, when they are capable to hear and answer some of the holy words: and though they do not perfectly understand them, yet they form them: and that you then sanctify them in soul and body with the great sacrament of initiation. For though they are not liable to give an account of their life, before their reason be come to maturity, they having this advantage by their age that they are not forced to account for the faults they have committed in ignorance, yet by reason of those sudden

\* *Νηπιον εστι σοι; μη λαβεται καιρον η κακια· εκ βρεφους αγιασθητω, εφ ου νηπων καθιερωθητω τω πνευματι.*

and unexpected assaults of dangers, that are by no endeavours to be prevented, it is by all means advisable that they be secured by the laver of baptism.”\*

From these passages it appears: 1st. That the persons, whom Gregory was addressing, were such as had not themselves been baptized, and consequently needed instruction in regard to the principles of Christianity. The question therefore which he supposes them to ask, in regard to their infants, affords no evidence, that infant baptism was not the settled practice of the church. 2dly. That the opinion Gregory expresses in regard to the baptism of their infants, was decidedly in favour of it. He did not, as appears plainly from other parts of this oration, think that they could go to heaven without it. 3dly. That as to the particular time when they should be presented for baptism, a thing which perhaps had been always various, inasmuch as no precise day was fixed by the Divine law, he expresses his private opinion that three years would be an appropriate one.

Let now the candid mind dispassionately weigh these testimonies, and see whether it is possible to extract from them the shadow of a proof that infant baptism was not the settled practice of the church; nay, whether Gregory

† Εστω ταυτα, φησι, περι των επιζητουντων το βαπτισμα· τι δ' αν ειποις περι των επι νηπιων, και μητε της ξημιας επαιθανομενων, μητε της λαοιτος; η και ταυτα βαπτισομεν; πανυγε, ειπερ τις επιειγη κινδυνος. Κρεισσον γαρ αναισθητως αγιασθηναι, η επελθειν ασφραγιστα, και ατελεστα. Και τουτου λογος ημιν η οκταημερος περιτομη, τυπικη τις ουσια σφραγισ, και αλογιστοις ετι προσαγομενη· ως δε και η των φλιων χρσις δια των αναισθητων φυλαττουσα τα πρωτοτοκα. Περι δε των αλλων διδωμι γνωμην, την τριετιαν αναμενοντας, η μικρον εντος τουτου, η υπερ τουτου, ηνικα και ακουσαι τι μυστικον και αποκρινεσθαι δυναται, ει και μη συνιεντα τελειως, αλλ' ουν τυπουμενα, ουτως αγιαζειν και ψυχας και σωματα τω μεγαλω μυστηριω της τελειωσης.

*De Baptismo, Or, 40.*



ought not to be classed among the decided witnesses to the fact of its being so?

Another supposed evidence to the contrary is taken from the writings of Basil of Cæsarea, who addresses a part of his audience as instructed in Christianity from their infancy, and yet as unbaptized. But this venerable writer does not say what he is represented as saying. The passage extracted from his writings is not only abridged, but mis-translated precisely in that part, upon which Baptist writers build their argument. Basil, in one of his Lent sermons, invites the persons he was addressing, to come forward to baptism, and these persons, it is argued, must have been the children, not of Pagans, but of Christians, because the church calls them "her sons," and is said to have "*brought them forth*."\* Here, however, the proof fails. Basil does not stile them the *sons* of the church, but the *pupils of the church*; he does not represent the church as having "*brought them forth*," but alluding figuratively to the pains which the church had taken to teach them the elementary truths of religion, he represents her as "*having laboured with them*,"† and as now anxious "*to bring them to the birth*,"‡ i. e. to the spiritual birth represented by baptism. The persons he addressed were the Catechumens; and there is not a shadow of evidence to shew that their parents were baptized persons. A vast proportion of the Catechumens were children of pagans,—of persons who were sufficiently reconciled to Christianity to suffer their children to be instructed in the catechetical schools, though they were not baptized themselves. These children were often admitted

\*See Mr. C's pamphlet p. 97.

†οὐδὲν, 2. Institutio, in formando aliquo et educando, matris curâ et solitudine elaboro.—Gal. iv. 19. Schleusner, ‡ἐκπονήσῃ, pario, factum maturum deponere.

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Dr, 40.

catechumens at seven years of age, and went through a regular course of instruction preparatory to their baptism. After undergoing this course of instruction, many were dilatory in coming forward to it, and it was such persons whom Basil addressed. His real language is as follows: "What time can be more proper for baptism than Easter, since that day is a monument of the resurrection, and baptism is the power, the earnest, and the pledge of our rising again. Let us, therefore, receive the grace of the resurrection, on the day of the resurrection. The church, moreover with uplifted voice *calls her pupils from afar, that those whom she has previously been in labour with, she may then at length bring forth, and administer to them, when removed from the elements of instruction, the solid food of her doctrine.* For John preached the baptism of repentance, and all Judea went to him; but the Lord announced a baptism far more illustrious; that of the *adoption of children.* Who then that entertains hope in him will refuse to obey? The baptism of John was an introductory baptism; that of Jesus a perfective one. That called away from sin; this unites us with, and places us in, the household of God\*. The preaching of John was the preaching of one man, and yet it drew all to repentance. And do you, having been solemnly instructed by the Prophets, "Wash you, make you clean;" admonished by the Psalmist, "Approach to him and be enlightened;" instructed by the Apostles "Repent and be baptized in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the promise of the Holy Ghost;" finally, being invited by our Lord himself, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you;" (for all these things have met together in

\*We hope our readers will mark the strong line of distinction which Basil draws between the baptism of John and that of Jesus.

our reading to-day) do you after all this delay? do you deliberate? do you hesitate? Having from your childhood been instructed in the doctrine of Christ, are you not yet familiar with the truth? Having been always learning, have you not yet come to the knowledge of the truth? When,—if you are to be upon trial all your life, if you are to inquire until old age comes upon you,—when will you be a Christian? When shall we recognise you as one of us? Last year you tarried for this occasion, and now again are you waiting for a further one? \* Whoever carefully examines this passage must see, that it affords no evidence whatever, that the persons Basil addressed were the descendants of Christian parents. Those expressions in it, which have been supposed to supply such evidence, have

\* Τι δ' ἂν γένοιτο τῆς ἡμέρας του πασχα συγγενεστέρον πρὸς το βαπτισμας; ἢ μὲν γὰρ ἡμέρα ἡμεροσυνον ἐστὶ ἀναστάσεως· το δὲ βαπτισμα δυνάμει ἐστὶ πρὸς τὴν ἀναστασιν· ἐν τοιούτῃ ἀναστάσει (ἡμέρᾳ) τῆς ἀναστάσεως τὴν χεῖρ ὑποδέσμευθα. διὰ τὸ πορρωθεν ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῖς ταύτης τροφίμοις νυφῶν κηρύγματι συγκαλεῖ, ἵν' οἱς παλαι ὠδίνεν ἀποκυρήσῃσι, καὶ ἀπογαλκίσαντα αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον τῆς κατήχησεως, γένῃ τῆς σεύρας τὸν δογματῶν τροφῆς. Ἰωάννης ἐκήρυξε βαπτισμα μετανοίας, καὶ ἐξελπομένο πρὸς αὐτὸν πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία. Κύριος κήρυξε βαπτισμα νιοθεσίας, καὶ τίς τῶν εἰς αὐτὸν ἡλθικῶν ἤχλησεν; Ἐκείνο εἰσαγωγικόν το βαπτισμα τὸ τοῦ τελειωτικόν. Ἐκείνο ἀμαρτίας ἀναχωρητικόν· τὸ οἰκτιρῶν πρὸς Θεόν. Ἐνός ἀνδρὸς ἦν Ἰωάννης το κηρύγμα, καὶ πάντας εἶλεν πρὸς τὴν μετανοίαν· σὺ δὲ, διὰ προφητῶν διδασκόμενος, ἤσασθε, καθαροὶ γενέσθε· διὰ πάλιν ἡμεῖς διδασκόμενος, προσέλθετε πρὸς αὐτὸν, καὶ φρονησάτω· δι' ἀποστόλων εὐαγγελιζόμενος, μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθήτω· ἵνα ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι τῆ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκταρσιν σμαρτῶν, καὶ λήψῃσθε τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος· ἵνα αὐτοὶ τῷ κυρίῳ προσλαμβάνομενος, λεγοῦντες, δευτε πρὸς μὴ πάντες οἱ κολλῶντες, καὶ πεφοβημένοι, καὶ ἀνατανασθῇμας· (ταῦτα γὰρ πάντα συνέδραμε πρὸς τὴν ἀγαπῶν) οὐκίς, καὶ βλεπῇ, καὶ διαμείλῃ; ἐκ νῆστιν τοῦ λόγου κατήχητος ἡμεῖς συνῶν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ; πάντες μαθηταὶν ὡς εἶπεν ἡμεῖς πρὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν; περὶ αὐτοῦ διαβῶν, κατασκόπος μερῶν γῆρας, ποτε γένῃ χριστιανός; ποτε γινώσκοντες αὐτὸς ἡμεῖς; περὶ τοῦ παρὸντα κείρον ἐξείδεο, ἢν παλιν ἀναστῇς τὸν ἐλπίοντα;

S. Basilii Opera, Parisiis, 1618. Tom. 1. p. 486.

been totally misunderstood by Dr. Chapin, and our opponent, in depending upon his authority, has fallen into his error. But while the writings of Basil afford no evidence *against*, they furnish a very strong one *in favour* of the prevalence of infant baptism, and of his own concurrence in the practice. Alluding, in a fast day sermon, to the supineness of the adults in attending the service, he says: "The infants were brought in crowds, but the grown men were absent," and then adds, "*they* (the infants) *ought indeed to be present, but they should come together with you.*" The service alluded to was one, at which unbaptized persons, whether adults or infants, were never admitted. The infants then, who came in crowds, and who, Basil declared, ought to be present, were baptized.

Still following Dr. Chapin, our opponent next endeavours to prove, that, from the fourth to the eleventh century, there were some who opposed infant baptism.\* If this were established, it would be of little consequence; for there is no reason why this, as well as other errors, should not have been introduced, especially after the rise of the Pelagian heresy. The first evidence plainly owes its origin to that heresy. The decree of the council of Mela is plainly directed against Pelagians, and who can wonder, that men who denied original sin, and who felt how seriously the practice of infant baptism opposed their error, should labour to get rid of that likewise? Antipædobaptists must be hard pressed indeed for the proofs of the antiquity of their cause, when they consent to trace it up to the followers of Pelagius. But in the sixth century, we are told, "the council of Lerida passed a decree in reference to those who had fallen in the prevarication of *Anabaptism*." And who were *these*? Not persons who objected to *infant baptism*, but *persons who administered*

\*See Mr. C.'s pamphlet, pages 97, 98.

*baptism again to those who came over to them from other denominations*, and hence received the title of *Anabaptists*, or *Re-baptizers*. Many of the schismatics and heretics of the ancient church did this, with regard to those who joined them from the Catholic church; and many particular churches did the same thing with regard to them. The council of Nice passed some decrees in relation to this point, determining who should, and who should not, be received in this way. It is to this matter that the decree of the council of Lerida appears to point, and not to any thing connected with the question of infant baptism.—The next allusion to the council of Girona is quite as irrelevant. It is referred to, in the publication of our opponent, as putting forth “the first Ecclesiastical canon in Europe, for the baptism of babes.” But this is a most incorrect account of the matter. The real object of the canon in question was not to *authorize the baptism of babes*, for this was the universal practice of the church, but to authorize their being baptized immediately upon their birth, in case of sickness, *without waiting for the approaching Festival of Easter or Whitsuntide*, which was the usual time for administering baptism, both to adults and infants. Any person who examines carefully, and in connexion, the 4th and 5th canons of this council, will see that such was the design of the canon in question.—But if the preceding proofs of the existence of ancient Antipædobaptists fail, what shall we say to the reference to Charlemagne? Charlemagne, we are told, passed a law in 789, “to compel his subjects to submit to baptism themselves, and to bring their infants to it.” But who were these subjects? They were the *Saxons*, then *Heathens, obstinate Idolators*. When other means of softening their ferocity failed, Charlemagne endeavoured to accomplish this end by compelling them to adopt Chris-

tianity, and with this view enacted the law in question. Now is it not strange to appeal to such a law for evidence that there were Antipædobaptists in the ninth century? Are our opponents compelled to bring forward, not merely Pelagians, but even the Pagans themselves as examples of it? Must there not be something wrong in a cause that needs such support as this?—But Hosius, President of the council of Trent, is quoted, as tracing up the heresy of Anabaptism to the time of Austin. "The Cardinal," says our opponent, "probably alluded to the Waldenses, many of whom denied infant baptism." Now we do not find the rejection of infant baptism among the articles of faith adopted by the Waldenses,\* nor do we believe that Hosius had any intention to assert that Antipædobaptists existed in the days of Austin. The mere existence of persons who denied or opposed the practice of infant baptism, could afford indeed no evidence against its validity, any more than the existence of Arians or Apollinarians can against the divinity or humanity of Christ. Heresy would still be heresy, whether existing in the days of Hosius or of Austin; yet we are firmly convinced, that this particular heresy did not then exist as neither Austin nor his learned competitor Pelagius, had ever heard of it. We presume, therefore, that Hosius does not allude to the opposers of infant baptism, but to the re-baptizers, or Anabaptists, to whom we have already alluded, and who abounded in the early ages of the church as well as at the reformation.

\*About the year 1130 one sect among the Waldenses objected to Infants being baptized, because they thought them incapable of salvation; but the main body of that people rejected their error, and they who held it soon dwindled away. In the year 1825, Mr. Dwight of Boston visited the Waldenses, and was assured by Mr. Bert, a moderator of the Waldensian Synod, "that the Waldenses had always baptized their infants, and always done it by affusion." See, also, Wall's History, page 402.

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An appeal is next made to the history of Catechumens, as furnishing an inference in favour of Baptist opinions.— "The children of ancient believing parents, we are told, were admitted Catechumens as soon as they were capable of instruction. But among this class none were admitted, who had been washed in the sacred Laver."\* Therefore it is inferred that the children of believing parents could not have been thus washed. We deny the minor proposition of the argument, and therefore of course reject the conclusion. It is not true that none were admitted Catechumens, who had been washed in the sacred Laver. The contrary is affirmed by those who have investigated the subject. Bingham says, "As for the children of believing parents, it is certain that as they were baptized in infancy, so they were admitted Catechumens as soon as they were capable of learning."† Wheatley says, "The *Catechumens* were generally such as were come to *years of discretion*, but having been born of Heathen parents, were not yet baptized. So that they catechized them *before* their baptism, as we also do those who are not baptized till they come to *riper years*. But as to the children of believing parents, it is certain, that as they were baptized in infancy, they could not then, any more than now, be admitted Catechumens till *after* baptism."‡ Shepherd says, "In the primitive age, children born of Christian parents were commonly baptized in their infancy, and admitted into the catechetical schools, as soon as they were capable of learning the first rudiments of Christianity."§ It is only necessary to add, that the practice of the church, in regard to Catechumens, declined in the dark ages, when the great object of the Ecclesiastics was to keep the laity

\*See Mr. C's. pamphlet, p. 98.

†Vol. iv. B. 10.

‡Wheatley on the common prayer, C. viii. S. 2.

§Shepherd on the common prayer, Vol. II. p. 263.

in ignorance. At this period, the creed, the Lord's prayer, and ten commandments, which had formerly been the basis of instruction to Catechumens, were only taught in Latin, which the illiterate did not understand. It was this subtle policy of the Bishops of Rome, and not infant baptism, that superseded the instruction of Catechumens, and accordingly at the reformation this system was restored, without superseding infant baptism.

Our opponent, anxious by every possible means to weaken the force of the argument derived from the ancient practice of the church, refers us next to the numerous errors that prevailed at an early period, and especially to the custom of administering the communion to infants. "If infant baptism," he says, "was an early practice, infant communion was equally so."\* This, if granted, might furnish an argument in favour of infant communion, but certainly no valid one against infant baptism. But let the case be fairly stated. "No mention is found of this practice before the time of Cyprian, one hundred and fifty years after the times of the Apostles; and he does not speak of infants, but of a child four or five years old; nor after him till the time of Augustine and Innocent of Rome, three hundred years from the same times, from whose authority the practice seems to have spread throughout the west for the following six hundred years, during which time it was adopted by the Greek church. It declined in the west about the year one thousand, when the church of Rome, beginning to entertain the doctrine of transubstantiation, no longer gave the holy elements to infants, though probably to this day it is continued in the Greek church as it was observed by it about a century since. [See Wall. II. 446.] It is obvious to remark

\*Mr. C's pamphlet, p. 99.



on this account, that the practice of administering the Sacrament of the Eucharist to infants was unknown for a century and a half after the Apostolic times, and that its existence even then is uncertain; that it wants the stamp of that primitive authority which derives its virtue from the well known axiom, "that which is first is true." And as it is not so *early* as the baptism of infants, neither, if it ever did obtain so general usage in the church, was it ever *general* till after the time of Augustine and Innocent of Rome, three hundred years from the Apostles, when the church was overrun with corruptions both of doctrine and practice."\* It is impossible, therefore, if we speak with candour, to compare this practice either in point of antiquity or evidence with that of infant baptism, which has been clearly shewn to have existed in the church from the very days of the Apostles down to the present time. St. Austin is stated to have held that "the communicating of infants was as much apostolic tradition as the baptizing them."† But as the ground for this opinion is given, we must be permitted to say, that even Chillingworth's authority is not sufficient to sustain it. St. Austin, in common with many of the fathers, held that apostolic tradition taught, that without the participation of baptism, and the Lord's Supper, none could be saved; and by apostolic tradition he meant the words of Christ, recorded by his apostle, John iii. 5, and John vi. 53. Upon these declarations he built the inference that infants must communicate in order to be saved. It is the general truth that *none could be saved without these Sacraments*, that Austin terms apostolic tradition. But the application of this doctrine to infant communion is his own consequence drawn from it, and which he never asserts to have been the subject of any

\*Budd on infant baptism, p. 51. †Mr. C's Pamphlet, page 99.

particular communication or tradition whatever. Mosheim is also quoted to shew that infant communion probably existed in the second century.\* What a profound absurdity, then, must be the inference lately drawn from the writings of Basil!† They were adduced to prove that the title of infants to baptism was not established even in the fourth century, and now Mosheim is brought forward to shew they were communicants in the second. If Mosheim's suggestion is unworthy of credit, it was unworthy of being quoted; if it is entitled to belief, then must it be granted that infants were *baptized in the second century*, that the practice has existed from the very days of the Apostles; for nothing is better established than the fact, that none were admitted to the Eucharist, who had not first been admitted to baptism.

An effort is made to shew, that the arguments for infant communion, and infant baptism are parallel; that the one cannot be supported or destroyed without supporting or destroying the other.‡ Let this be clearly proved to our satisfaction, and we will admit our baptized infants to the communion, if they can partake of it. We are so fully assured that the one ordinance is their right and privilege, that we shall never hesitate to adopt and practice whatever this assurance requires. But as yet we are not convinced, that the arguments for their admission to the Eucharist are as cogent, as those for their admission to baptism; on the contrary, we plainly see that all attempts to support this opinion have signally failed. We do not, for example, think that the pre-requisites of faith and repentance are demanded with the same *universality* in the one case as in the other. We think there is precisely the same difference in this point, that we discover under the Jewish

\*Mr. C's. pamphlet p. 100.

†Mr. C. p. 97.

‡Mr. C's. pamphlet, p. 101.

dispensation in regard to circumcision and the passover. Moses is an example of it. Without faith he was circumcised at eight days old; but through faith he kept the passover. The design of the initiatory institution admitted what the design of the commemorative one did not. Accordingly, in regard to the Christian sacraments, we do not find the same kind of language employed by our Lord, when enjoining the one institution, as when enjoining the other. He says in regard to the one, "Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them;" but it is to those alone who had reached maturity that he addressed the precept, "do this in remembrance of me." Nor can we gather from any thing said in the New Testament, the slightest hint that the Apostles ever administered the Lord's Supper to infants, but we do gather, as we conceive, strong indications that they administered to them the rite of baptism. The same distinction, also, we observe in the practice of the primitive church. We do not find the same proof of the prevalence of infant communion, in the age immediately succeeding the Apostles, that we do of infant baptism. The first hint to be traced of young children being admitted to the communion is in the story related by Cyprian, to which we have already alluded, and which referred to the case of a little girl, who was probably five years of age. This instance cannot be fairly adduced as a proof of infant communion, unless they who advance it are prepared to admit, that the instances of such children being baptized, whether mentioned by a Nazianzen or Tertullian, are valid evidences of the prevalence of infant baptism. Upon their own principles, this case ought only to be regarded as an *approach to infant communion*, the commencement of a *novel custom*,\* at the very moment when infant baptism was universally

\*See Mr. C's reasoning at p. 91 of his pamphlet.

practised. It is further worthy of remark, that we do not derive from analogy the same warrant for administering the Lord's Supper to infants, that we do for administering baptism. Infants, in Abraham's day, received the sign of the everlasting covenant at the express command of God; but the passover was not instituted for four hundred and thirty years after, and when instituted, was accompanied with regulations which it would be absurd to suppose young infants to have observed. How could infants of ten days old, eat the lamb, and the bitter herbs, with "loins girded, and staff in hand" to assist them in travelling? Present they might have been at the first celebration of the passover; we know not in fact, under the peculiar circumstances of that people, how they could well have been absent; but *commanded* to be present, either then, or subsequently when the passover was celebrated at Jerusalem, they were not. Nor was it *customary* for them to be so. The practice of the Jewish church was to have their children instructed in the law till they were ten years of age, and from thence to fifteen in the Talmud. At twelve or thirteen they were brought to the house of God, to be publicly examined, and, being approved, were declared to be "children of the precept;" that is, they were obliged to keep the law, and were thenceforth answerable for their actions. That younger children, as Witsius suggests, may, when present, have been permitted to share the Paschal Feast, is highly probable, but that it was the law or custom of the Jewish church for infants to do so, is not a matter of fact. The contrast, therefore, drawn by our opponent between the Jewish church and the Pædobaptist communions, in this particular is not sustained.

We are told, that learned and candid Pædobaptists, such as Neander, Burnett, Luther, Curcellæus, Rigaltius, and Baxter, have arrived at the same conclusion as

the author of the pamphlet we are replying to; viz. "that infant baptism was not commonly allowed in the primitive ages of Christianity."\*

In regard to Neander, we may remark, that there are two suppositions under which we may view his testimony. He is either a man of immense learning, powerful talents, sound judgment, and decisive piety; or he is wanting in some of these qualities, which are so essential in the witness whose single testimony is to overbalance the testimony of all Christendom.

Let us take the former supposition, which is that of Professor Robinson,† and then mark the following points.

1. This prodigy of learning and piety, whose opinion in Germany is paramount to demonstration, *continues a pædobaptist*. He has read all that antiquity offers upon the subject, he has weighed it with a candid mind, and yet *adheres to that system, which upholds the propriety of infant baptism*. How can this be accounted for, except upon the supposition that he deems that system after all most conformable to the will of God?

2. Let it be noted with equal attention, that the same powerful mind has arrived at the conclusion, that "the two-fold action of submersion and emersion in baptism, is what is merely accidental in the form of the symbol, to which Christ, in the institution of the symbol, assuredly had no regard,‡--this particular mode of immersion, being practised among the Jews, passed over to the heathen Christians, but was not enjoined by Christ. Let baptists mark this, and abide by it!

If, however, this part of Neander's testimony is not acceptable, let us then take the second supposition. Let us

\*See Mr. C.'s pamphlet, pages 102—106.

†See Mr. C.'s pamphlet, p. 102.

‡See the passage quoted from his works in Mr. C.'s pamph. p. 103.

suppose him to be wanting in some of the essential qualities above named—that, either his judgment, piety, or learning is defective, and then we ask, of what value is his opinion upon a point where these qualities are absolute requisites to render his testimony indisputable? Neander may possess prodigious memory, yet we think he has forgotten or overlooked the testimonies of Justin, Irenæus and Tertullian, when he conjectures that “infant baptism was not practised in the latter part of the Apostolic age.” He may possess “great sagacity,” and yet we plainly perceive that he builds this hypothesis upon slender grounds. We question the truth of his assertion, that “Faith and Baptism were always united.” We dispute his assumption in regard to the family of *Stephanas*; we think his reasoning from St. Paul’s views of justification wholly inconclusive; his inference from St. Paul’s language to the *Corinthians*, directly opposed to truth; and when he comes to “develope infant baptism out of an idea suggested by a passage” which he tells us implied that the children of Christians were *not* baptized, and then to maintain “that it is thereby to be justified in the spirit of Paul,” we are constrained to confess, with the author of the pamphlet before us, that “contradiction” and feebleness characterize his reasonings. Who can consent to rest his faith upon the opinion of such a man?

The testimony of Curcellæus\* deserves but little credit. Wall justly remarks, “he affirms a thing of antiquity, for which he adduces no quotation for proof; and he makes the affirmation, in support of the Socinian paradox, that there is no such thing as original sin”.†

The opinion of Salmasius and Suicerus,‡ who adopted it from him stands also without proof.

\*Mr. C’s pamphlet, p. 105.

†See Wall’s Hist. p. 268.

‡These writers thought that infant baptism was not practised at

Rigaltius is a witness of still less repute. In quoting his sentiments, our opponent refers to Dr. Wall and Bishop Fell for evidence of his *great learning*. Dr. Wall's evidence, however, is not likely to exalt Rigaltius much in our estimation, for he clearly proves him to have been guilty of great partiality and misrepresentation, if not of actually mutilating a passage of Tertullian to render it more favourable to Anabaptist opinions. And as to Bishop Fell's opinion of him, it is expressed in these unceremonious terms. "He has acted the part not of an annotator on St. Cyprian, but of a prevaricator with him. What he says here is no other sort of stuff, that what some fanatic of the Anabaptist crew would have said."\* We are far from approving of the style of this quotation, and merely adduce it to show that Rigaltius, whatever recommendations he possessed, should never have gone to the Bishop of Oxford for a testimonial.

first, but came in afterwards, (in the third century) owing to the opinion that it was necessary to salvation. The learned Mr. Bingham says, in reply,—“I shall not think myself obliged to be very precise in refuting this opinion, together with the *false supposition* that is made the foundation of it. In all cases where water-baptism may be had, they (the *most* ancient fathers) conclude as generally for the necessity of it from that assertion of our Saviour, “Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” This was not only a doctrine of the third or fourth ages, as Salmasius and Suicerus represent, but the doctrine of the very first ages immediately succeeding the apostles. For we see Hermes Pastor, who lived in the apostolic age, founds the general necessity of baptism upon that very saying of our Saviour. And therefore they who represent this doctrine of the necessity of baptism as a novelty, or an error, first introduced into the church in the age of St. Austin against Pelagian heretics, do manifest wrong both to the doctrine itself and to St. Austin, and to the ancients who embraced and delivered the same before him.”

Bingham's *Origin. Ecclesiast. B.* 11, C, 4, Sect. 5, 6.

\*See Wall's Hist. p. 269.

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Baxter is quoted as admitting, that "the words of Tertullian and Nazianzen shew that it was long before all were agreed" upon the subject of infant baptism. We have already fully considered the sentiments of Tertullian and Nazianzen, and shall therefore only add Mr. Baxter's own opinion. "God," he says, "had never a church on earth, of which infants were not infant members, since there were infants in the world."\*

Two other authorities are quoted by our opponent, Luther, and Burnet. The works of the former we have not at hand to consult, but if the passage extracted from them is dealt with as that from Bishop Burnet has been, we can only say, it ought to be restored to its context, and never again appear on the Baptist side of this question. Burnet's words are these—"Upon these reasons we conclude that though there is no express precept or rule given in the New Testament for the baptism of infants, yet it is most agreeable to the institution of Christ, since he conformed his institutions to those of the Mosaic law, as far as could consist with his design; and therefore in any thing of this kind, in which the just tenderness of human nature does dispose parents to secure to their children a title to the mercies and blessings of the Gospel, there is no reason to think that, this being so fully set forth and assured to the Jews in the Old Testament, that Christ should not have intended to give parents the same comforts and assurance by his Gospel, that they had under the law of Moses. Since nothing is said against it, we may conclude, from the nature of the two dispensations and the proper relation and gradation that is between them, that children under the New Testament are a holy seed, as well as they were under the

\*Baxter's comment upon Matt. xxviii. 19.



Old, and by consequence that they may be now baptized, as well as they were then circumcised.”\*

We have thus patiently investigated our opponent's tenth chapter, which he entitles “A true statement of historical evidence concerning infant baptism,” and, at the close, are constrained to say, that either the title or the contents of that chapter ought, in candour, to be altered, if its author wishes, as we presume he does, that the public mind should be rightly informed upon the subject.

\*See “Exposition of the Articles,” p. 309.

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## CHAPTER X.

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### ON THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

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ON entering upon the discussion of the Mode of Baptism, we wish it to be distinctly understood, that our object is not to urge objections against immersion, as an exceptionable method of administering this holy rite. If immersion could be shewn to be a more striking emblem of regeneration than other modes of baptism, we should cordially acquiesce in it, and delight to see that vitally important subject brought, as distinctly and powerfully as possible, before the view of the church of God. We are perfectly aware also, that this mode prevailed in the Christian church, at a very early period, and is at the present day the ordinary practice of a large portion of the

Christian world. As members of the Church of England, moreover, we feel ourselves fully authorized to practise it, and if its general adoption could tend to lessen the scruples that are sometimes felt in regard to the propriety of other modes, and in any measure to heal the divisions that have arisen upon the subject, we should hail the event with the most unfeigned pleasure. But while we rejoice to be exempted from the necessity of passing any censure upon the practice of those who prefer immersion to other methods, we do most seriously, and after the most careful investigation of the subject, protest against the assertion that this is the only valid mode of administering the ordinance. We have examined with strict attention the several arguments that have been urged to prove this point, and more particularly all the late accessions that ingenuity and research have been able to make to them; and the result of the examination has been, to produce the most decided conviction, that they have failed to accomplish the object. We shall now endeavour to review these arguments with brevity and candour, and to ascribe to them precisely the weight they really possess, and no more. In doing this, it will be requisite to examine the meaning of the term *baptize* in sacred and profane authors; to consider particularly the instances of, and allusions to, baptism in the New Testament; and to inquire into the testimony of history, as to the practice of the Christian church. These points, of course, cannot be fully discussed in a single chapter; but the substance of the evidence on both sides may be placed before our readers. In pursuance of this design, we remark—

I. That the term *baptize* is not always used in the sense of *immersion*, by profane writers.

Our opponent has endeavoured to shew, that this term has "a single specific meaning," viz. "to immerse," and

therefore cannot be used in any other sense, with reference to the sacrament of baptism. In proof of this he appeals to the authority of Biblical critics. Professors Stuart and Ripley, we are told, "have so thoroughly investigated the subject, as to leave apparently nothing unsaid that relates to it."\* The former has stated all the instances in which the term *baptize* can be supposed to depart from its radical meaning of *immerse* or *plunge*, and the latter in his reply has shewn that in these very instances it retains that meaning; so that their combined labours have completely set the question at rest. At this point we pause, and claim the privilege which our opponent takes of expressing an opinion upon the evidence advanced by Professors Stuart and Ripley. Their learning, talents, and integrity we freely admit; but the comparative value of their reasonings upon this long disputed topic we estimate somewhat differently from the author of the pamphlet before us.†

As to the fact that the word in question has generally in classic writers the meaning of to plunge or immerse, we never heard of a scholar or a critic who denied it. The only question is, whether it is limited to this meaning; whether there are not shades of difference in its signification discoverable in profane writers, and still more obviously in sacred writers, which destroy the argument that is built upon the supposed exclusive meaning of it.

\*Mr. C's. pamphlet, p. 126.

†As reference has been made to the writings of Professors Stuart and Ripley, we shall, in the next few pages, present our readers with a brief analysis of their arguments; but they who wish to investigate the subject fully should peruse with care their respective treatises. Though Mr. Ripley's is professedly a reply to the former, he has by no means been able to shake the main positions of his learned opponent.

That it has these different significations, we think may be established by sufficient evidence.

1. In the following passages, βαπτίζω signifies to *overwhelm with water, by its rushing in upon the objects referred to, and not by plunging them into it, as in the case of immersion.*

Aristotle, *De Mirabil. Ausc.* Speaks of a saying among the Phœnicians, that there were certain places beyond the pillars of Hercules, "*which, when it is ebb-tide, are not overflowed (ὡς βαπτίζονται)* but at full-tide are covered with the waves, (*κατακλυζονται*).

Diodorus Siculus, *Tom. I. p. 107*, "*Most of the land animals that are intercepted by the river [Nile] perish, being overwhelmed.*" (βαπτίζοντα).

Diodorus Siculus, *Tom. VII. p. 191*. "*The river rushing down with a stronger current overwhelmed (εβαπτίσθη) many with water.*

In these passages the term *baptize* obviously bears the meaning we have assigned to it above; nor is it of any avail to say, that "the variation here from its first and primary meaning is slight." There is this marked distinction, that it does not mean, as Baptists contend it invariably does, to *dip the thing spoken of into water*, but that *the water is applied to it, by rushing or pouring in upon it.\**

2. In the following passages, βαπτίζω means to *overwhelm in a figurative sense.*

Justin Martyr, *Dialog. cum Tryphone*, p. 513. "*Overwhelmed with sins.*" (βεβαλυσμένος αμαρτίας.)

\*Does not the parallel between *immersion* and *burial* for which Baptists contend, depend upon this very point, which is here abandoned, as a difference of no importance? Mr. Crawley styles it a "slight variation", and says "that which is overflowed is immersed."—See his pamphlet, p. 127, 128.

Plutarch, Tom. VI. p. 30. "*The soul is nourished by moderate labours, but is overwhelmed (βαπτίζεται) by excessive ones.*"

A variety of examples might be quoted to exemplify this use of the term, but the above are sufficient. It is repeatedly employed in this sense, to signify the being overpowered with wine, cares, business, or any thing of this description.\*

3. In the following passage, βαπτίζω signifies to *pour out water upon* the thing referred to.

Origen, Comment. in Joann. p. 116. "And what makes you think that Elias when he comes will *baptize*, who, in Ahab's time, did *not baptize the altar*, which was to be washed before it was burnt up, when the Lord should shew himself in fire? For he ordered the priest to do that, not only once, for he says, do it the second time," &c.

In this passage it is plain that Origen calls *pouring water on the altar*, "*baptizing it.*" Elijah's command was, "Fill four barrels† with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood." And this is what Origen here calls the baptism of the wood and sacrifice.

II. The term *baptize* does not retain exclusively the sense of immersion in the *Septuagint* and *Apocrypha*.

1. In the *Septuagint*.

Isaiah xxi. 4. "Fearfulness affrighted me" (αε βαπτίζει.)

2 Kings v. 14. "Then went he down and *dipped* himself (εβαπτισατο) seven times in Jordan."

In the first passage the term "*baptize*," is evidently

\*See Biblical Repository, No. X. p. 303.

†The Hebrew word rendered by the term "*barrels*" at 1 Kings xviii. 33, properly means a *pitcher* or *earthen jar*, such as females in those days were accustomed to carry water in. See Gen. xxiv. 14, and Parkhurst's Heb. Lex.

used in a figurative sense. Professor Stuart renders the clause, "My iniquity *overwhelms* me." It is therefore, as far as it has any bearing upon the subject before us, to be classed among the exceptions to the ordinary use of the term. In the second passage, it is doubtful whether we ought to render it by the term "plunged" or "washed." Professor Stuart selects the former; Wall the latter. He remarks that Naaman's body does not seem to have been leprous all over, that we need suppose him to have gone all over into the water, but some one place of it: for what he had expected of the prophet was, that he should have stricken his hand *over the place*, and recovered the leper. He further remarks, that the washing which Naaman performed is four times expressed; once in the command; once in Naaman's refusal; once in his servant's entreaty; lastly, in describing his obedience: and that as in the first three instances it is the verb *λουω* that is employed, and in the last *βαπτίζω*, it shews that these words are used synonymously and promiscuously.\* We freely admit, however, that the washing of Naaman might have been by immersion; though the term *βαπτίζω* cannot in itself determine the point. These are the only instances where the word occurs in the Septuagint.

## 2. In the Apocrypha.

Judith xii. 7. "She went out by night into the valley of Bethulia, and *washed herself* (*ἐβαπτίστην*) in the camp, at the fountain of water."

Eccelus. xxxiv. 25. "He that *washeth himself* after touching a dead body (*βαπτίζομενος ἀπο νεκροῦ*) if he touch it again, what availeth his washing?" (*τῷ λουτρῷ αὐτοῦ.*)

With regard to the first of these passages, we decidedly think it affords, as Mr. Stuart believes, an instance where the term *baptize* is evidently synonymous with the

\*Wall's Defence, p. 103.

term *wash*, and where there is not the slightest evidence to indicate that the washing referred to was a total immersion, but strong reasons on the other hand to adopt the opposite conclusion. Whatever may be said about its "being at night,"\* we certainly do not think it likely, that a delicate female would have chosen the centre of a camp, for the purpose of immersion; and as the original which distinctly marks the fact that it was *in* the camp, as distinctly declares that it was *at* the fountain, we think the probabilities are strongly against the idea that there was any immersion in the case. Professor Ripley admits that "instead of *in a fountain of water*, a more correct translation would be *at the fountain of water*"; but suggests that "there may have been conveniences for bathing the whole person in the immediate vicinity of it."† The possibility of this we do not question, but surely it is going too far to assume the fact, and then, for the sake of supporting a favourite theory, interpret the words "at the fountain," to mean *in an artificial bath filled with water from the fountain*. Could even the fact be established that such a provision for total immersion was prepared in the vicinity of this fountain, we still think it unlikely that Judith plunged or immersed herself into it, in the midst of the camp. The historian tells us, that it was actually in the midst of the camp (ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ) and it seems improbable that he would have used the expression, if he meant us to understand that it was in a retired situation at a distance from it. Professor Ripley refers us to chapter xiii. 10, 11, for an intimation that such was the case, but we confess that we cannot discover it there.‡ The

\*Mr. C.'s Pamphlet, p. 128. †Ripley's Examination, &c. p. 27. Mr. Crawley also adopts this view of the case.

‡The verses in question informs us, that Judith and her attendant, having passed through the camp, performed a circuit round



words he quotes from Maimonides,\* to shew that Judith might have entered the water in a suitable garment, would lead us to precisely the opposite conclusion; for they intimate that such was not the usual custom in these ceremonial ablutions. But of all the arguments he employs, his reference to Spencer's opinion†, appears the most unhappy. Spencer's reason for thinking that the Jews when performing their vows, sometimes "cleansed the whole body in a bath," was simply the idea that it was here said, Judith baptized herself *in a fountain of water*. But Professor Ripley has just told us this is an incorrect translation of the passage; it ought to be *at the fountain*, so that Spencer's opinion, in the present instance, is entitled to just so much weight as the passage under review can give it, which, according to Professor Ripley's own shewing, is nothing at all. Upon the whole, our conviction remains unaltered that Professor Stuart speaks justly when he says, "The example of Judith shews very clearly that washing of the person may be designated by βαπτίζω.‡"

The passage in Ecclesiasticus may be thus rendered. "He who is cleansed from a dead carcase, and toucheth it again, what does he profit by his washing?"§ But here the question arises, How was this cleansing performed? Was it by the process of *immersion*, or by *washing the person without plunging into the water*? Our opponent that "Professor Ripley in his reply to Mr. Stuart &c, has conclusively shewn by an extended in-

the valley of Bethulia, and ascended the mountain. Does this imply that the fountain was not in the midst of the camp, or that they were not in close conjunction? Let those who doubt upon the subject, refer to chap. vii. 3, and they will find that the army were encamped "in the valley, *by the fountain*." The original is *ἐν τῇ πελάγει* precisely the expression used to designate the place where Judith washed.

\*Page 29.

†*ibid.*

‡Stuart, p. 308.

§So Stuart.

vestigation that the Jewish method of bathing was to plunge the body in water," and refers in proof to the case of Naaman, and to a passage from Lightfoot.\* One fact, however, outweighs in our mind the whole of Professor Ripley's reasonings upon the question. The Hebrew word translated "bathing" in Numbers, is not the word that properly means to *immerse*, but that which simply signifies to *wash*. The term that signifies to immerse or dip is "Tabal." Examples of its use may be found Lev. iv. 6, 17, xiv. 16, ix. 9. Numb xix. 18. But the term that signifies to wash is "Rachats." Examples of its use may be found Lev. xiv. 8, 9, xv. 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 21, 22, 27. xvi. 26, 23. xvii. 15. Numb. xix. 7, 8, 19. In these instances our translators have rendered it differently, sometimes by the term *wash*, and sometimes by the term *bathe*; but there is no sufficient reason to think that in any of these it refers to immersion. "We find," says Professor Stuart, "no example among all the Levitical washings or ablutions, where immersion of the person is required. The word *Rachats*, which is almost uniformly employed, and which our translators have rendered *wash* and *bathe*, does not imply immersion. It may, indeed, admit the idea of immersion, because washing or ablution may be effected in this way; but on the other hand, the meaning of the verb is equally well answered, without immersion."† It is in vain then to refer us to this term in Numbers, as a proof that immersion was meant by the term *baptized* in Eccclus. for it would rather lead us to an opposite conclusion. But there is a consideration that supersedes the reasonings about this particular term, as well as other arguments advanced on this occasion. The word *bagtized* in Eccclus. does not appear to refer exclu-

\*Mr. C's. pamphlet, p. 129.

†Biblical Repos. p. 341.

sively to the bathing part of the purification required in Numb. xix, but to the whole process of cleansing described in vs. 16--20, and especially to the sprinkling the unclean person with the water of separation, vs. 18, 19, which was the main ceremony of the occasion. It appears to be used here somewhat in the same latitude that it is in Hebrews ix. 10, where the "divers washings" or baptisms, relate to all the various modes of purifying by the application of fluids, whether sprinkling, washing, or bathing, &c. For these reasons, we acquiesce in the translation of the passage as given by Professor Stuart, and must regard this as another instance where the term *baptized* is not used in the specific sense of immersion.

III. We have thus seen that the word *baptize* is not employed exclusively in the sense of immersing, either in the Septuagint, Apocrypha, or in classical authors; and we here remark that *there is less reason to think it must retain this specific meaning in the New Testament, on account of the peculiar manner in which it is there employed.*

The fact that it is ordinarily employed in this sense by classical authors would by no means be sufficient to prove that it must retain precisely this meaning in the New Testament, even if the manner of employing it were precisely the same in both cases, for it admits of no denial "that a multitude of Greek words here receive their colouring and particular meanings from the Hebrew and not from the Greek classics."\* But the fact is that the

\*"Do θεός, ουρανός, σαρξ, πνεῦμα, and other words almost without number, exhibit meanings which conform to the Greek classics; or which in several respects can even be illustrated by them? Not at all. Then how can you be over-confident in the application of the classical meaning of βαπτίζω, when the word is employed in relation to a rite that is purely Christian? Such a confidence is indeed common, but it is not the more rational, nor the more becoming on this account." Stuart, p. 382.

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general manner of employing this term in classical authors, where they intend to indicate the act of immersing or plunging into a fluid, is materially different from that adopted in the New Testament, where the term is employed in reference to the rite of baptism.

"The Greek classic writers are accustomed, when they designate the idea of *plunging*, *dipping*, *immersing*, etc. into any thing, to put the name of that thing in the accusative case after βαπτω and βαπτίζω, and to put before this case the preposition εις, or some equivalent one.\* But a review of the instances in which βαπτίζω is employed in the New Testament, presents a construction, in general, quite different from this. The result of such a review is, that after a particular examination of all the cases which refer either to the baptism of John, or of Jesus and his disciples, I find but a single instance of the construction which is so general in the classics, whenever the element made use of in order to perform the rite of baptism, is named.† The classical writers have expressed themselves in different ways, when employing the words βαπτω and βαπτίζω. They employ (1). The accusative case with εις before it, which is the usual construction. (2). The dative with εν. (3). The dative without εν. (4). The genitive with υπο, etc. (5). The genitive without a preposition.—But are all these modes of speaking, now exhibited, equivalent to each other? I think not. There is a difference which may be made quite manifest, between saying, εβαψεν εις τον

\*See a variety of examples quoted by Stuart. Bib. Rep. x. p. 313.

†The single instance referred to is in Mark i. 9, the words "εις τον Ιορδανην." But εις with an accusative is repeatedly used in the New Testament, with the same sense that εν has before a dative, viz. the sense of *at*. See examples, Mat. ii. 23. John xxi. 4. Acts viii. 40. See also John ix. 7, where "νιψαι εις κολυμβηθραν" means to *wash at the pool*, and not to *plunge into it*.

ποταμον, and εβαπεν εν τω ποταμω, or βαπτων τω ποταμω, βαπτων ποταμον, εβαφη υπο του ποταμου, κ. τ. λ. In the first case, I understand the writer or speaker as meaning to designate the *manner* of the baptism; *he plunged into the river* means, that he immersed or submerged himself, i. e. that he went down or sunk beneath the surface of the water. In all the other cases, the *manner* of the action is no farther designated than the words βαπτω or βαπτίζω imply it; but the *means, cause, or instrument* of baptism is designated, viz., the river, or the waters of the river. 'Εβαπτισε εις τον ποταμον cannot usually mean less, than that the individual of whom this is affirmed, did actually dive into the water, or was in some way submerged in it; whereas all the other methods of construction do not of necessity imply any more, than that the individual concerned *bathed himself* or *washed himself* with the element named. This may have been by plunging into it, or in any other way; but the expression, when the genitive or dative is used after the verb, either with or without a preposition, does not designate the *manner* of the baptism, but only the kind of element by which this baptism was effected. This results from the nature of the genitive and dative cases, and the prepositions with which they are connected in all the constructions now in question. To this I make the appeal; and those who know enough of the laws of syntax and idiom in Greek to be qualified to judge, will be able to determine for themselves whether the distinction now made is well founded."\*

IV. As might be anticipated from the above remarks, we find upon examination that the term *baptize* does not exclusively (we might even say generally) retain the meaning of immersion in the New Testament. To ascer-

\*Bib. Repos. x. 312—317.

tain this point we may examine the several instances where it occurs:—

1. Where it is used *without reference to the rite of baptism*; as in the following example—

Mark vii. 3, 4. "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash (*νιψονται*) their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, (*βαπτισονται*) they eat not."

The original here has two words which are both rendered *wash* in the above translation. The second one, as our readers will perceive, is the term *baptize*. Does it mean *immerse*? So Baptists think, but whether it refers to total or only partial immersion, to the immersion of the whole body, or only of the hands, they seem to stand in doubt. Upon the whole they appear to prefer the latter view of the case, to consider it as pointing to a *complete bathing of the hands* as distinguished from a washing by merely pouring water upon them.\* The distinction here contended for is questionable; but supposing the opinion to be well founded, what will it establish? It will establish this, and let our readers mark the fact, that this expression "they baptize themselves," where the verb is in the middle voice, need not mean, they immerse themselves entirely, but merely their hands or any other part, as circumstances suggest. It is perfectly correct, then, to say of a person, that he baptized himself, whether it was the face or hands, or any other part, that he bathed in water.

Luke xi. 38. "And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed (*εβαπτισθη*) before dinner."

Here the construction is somewhat different from the

\*See Professor Ripley's Treatise, pages 42—47, and Mr. Crawley's pamphlet, p. 139.

former passage; the verb is in the passive voice, and the passage literally translated stands thus:—"The Pharisee seeing him, wondered that *he was not first baptized before dinner.*" But what was the baptism or washing here referred to? Baptists contend, as in the former case, that it was the *dipping of the hands*, as contra-distinguished from the pouring water upon them.\* We are brought then by their own reasoning to this conclusion, that in the phraseology of that period, and in the estimation of the Pharisees, who were minutely informed upon such points, a person was rightly said to have been baptized, when a small part of him was bathed in water. But we further ask, is there any sufficient evidence that the baptizing referred to was, in the present instance, even a *partial immersion*, that it was any thing beyond the less formal kind of washing, by pouring a little water upon the hands? This, it is confessed, was the ordinary mode, the mode constantly practised except in one particular case, viz, *where the person had returned from market.* Was then this the case of our Lord in the instance before us? We are referred, in proof of it, to v. 29, where it is said of our Lord that *when the people were gathered thick together*, he began to say, &c. "As our Lord," it is said, "had been exposed to a great mixture of company, in the judgment of the Pharisee, he must have needed the more thorough sort of washing."† Now really, we cannot help feeling the conviction that this is pressing a point too far to accomplish a favourite object. We feel that we have not a shadow of evidence, to show that the Pharisee must have deemed our Lord's having addressed a number of persons in preaching, the same thing as having visited and returned from market, and

\*Mr. Crawley's pamphlet, p. 132.

†Professor Ripley, p. 47.

Mr. C's pamphlet, p. 132.

that on this account he expected him to have *immersed* his hands before dinner. If the rule which required this more formal ceremony had reference exclusively to the market place where meats or other articles were sold, and where every variety of persons were likely to be congregated together, we should expect the Pharisee to adhere strictly to the letter of the regulation, and to entertain no idea of enforcing it in other cases. We are therefore inclined to think that Wall, who refers to 2 Kings iii, 11, to the Jewish Rabbies, to Maimonides, and Dr. Pocock, in support of his opinion, is right in affirming, that this washing of the hands was by water poured out upon them from a vessel, or small cistern, and not by immersing or dipping them into the fluid.\*

Mark vii. 4. "The *washings* (βαπτισμοὺς) of cups and pots, and brazen vessels, and *couches*." (κλινῶν.)

Heb. ix. 10. "Only in meats and drinks, and divers *washings*." (βαπτισμοίς.)

Our readers will perceive in the first of the above examples, that the term rendered *tables* in our version, pro-

\*"As far as I have observed, there is only one mode of washing either the hands or the feet in Scripture, and that is by pouring water upon them, and rubbing them as the water flows. 2 Kings, iii. 11. "Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, who poured water on the hands of Elijah." In like manner, as to the feet, Gen. xviii. 4. "Let a little water, I pray thee, be fetched, and wash your feet;" That this water was to be *poured upon* the feet, we may learn from Luke vii. 44. "Thou gavest me no water upon my feet." (ὕδαρ ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας μου οὐκ ἔδωκας.) "but she hath washed" or wetted, literally rained upon "my feet with tears," (τοῖς δακρυαῖν ἔρρεξε μου τοὺς πόδας.) It seems to have been in the same way that Jesus washed his disciples' feet, John xiii; there is no hint that he dipped their feet in the basin. It was a ewer rather than a basin. It was filled once only, for washing the feet of all twelve. And Peter supposed his Master sufficiently provided with the water of that ewer to have washed not his feet only, but also his hands and his head." Grenville Ewing on Baptism, p. 98



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Baptism, p. 93

perly means the *couches* on which the guests reclined at their meals, and will immediately be sensible of the serious inconvenience of making it a custom on ordinary occasions to immerse these couches by way of ceremonial purification. To obviate this difficulty, the friends of immersion point us to a command in the Levitical Law, requiring that "any vessel wherein work was done, if the dead body of an animal had fallen upon it, must be put into water." This requisition, they think, the superstitious spirit of the Jews might have extended to other cases, besides that of pollution by the touch of the dead, and even led them carefully to cleanse by immersion the couches on which they reclined at meals. They also refer us to some rules quoted by Dr. Gill, which they think contribute to the belief, that there was actually performed an immersion of these articles, *when they needed special purifying*.\* The combined force of these remarks appears by no means sufficient to remove the improbability that immersions were ordinarily practised in regard to the utensils and articles mentioned in these texts. Dr. Campbell, though zealous for the theory of immersion, and confident that the term *baptize* should have been rendered *immerse*, in the former part of verse 4, has thought proper to retain the ambiguous term "baptism," feeling no doubt the difficulty of supposing that the Pharisees were ordinarily in the habit of immersing the couches on which they reclined at meat. There were generally three or more of these couches or beds in a room. Each of them was sufficiently capacious to contain three or five of the guests in a recumbent posture. It must then, to say the least, have been attended with great inconvenience in any climate, to repeat on ordinary occasions the immersion of these articles, as well as of the other utensils refer-

\*Professor Ripley, pages 43, 49. Mr. C's pamphlet, \* p. 193.

red to. The possibility of such a proceeding we do not dispute, but the probability of it we more than question, and are therefore inclined to view this as a further instance where the term *baptize* is used in a more general sense than that of immersion.

In the second of the above passages, the term baptism is applied by the Apostle to the different modes of purification under the Jewish law, some of which were performed by sprinkling, others by bathing. The attempts to disprove this have been feeble indeed. One is the assertion that "as the word has been found to mean immersion in every other case, it ought of course to be so rendered here also."\* This is plainly to beg the very question in dispute, to assume the very point at issue, and, as we conceive, to maintain what we have proved by decisive evidence to be untrue. But "such a translation" we are told "would be consistent with Jewish customs."† The simple term "βαπτισμοις" might, no doubt, be rendered immersions, where it referred exclusively to occasions on which immersions were practised. But it would not be consistent to translate διαφοροις βαπτισμοις *immersions*, because the former term evidently points to the *different kinds* of ceremonial ablutions which the law enjoined, and not merely to those which were performed by immersion. This term clearly shews that the Apostle is not naming "a part for the whole of the legal purifications," but pointing to the whole of them, and applying the term *baptisms*, as well to the sprinklings, pourings, and anointings, as the bathings.‡

\*Mr. C's. pamphlet, p. 133.

†"The Apostle's word here διαφοροις βαπτισμοις does both by its etymology and constant use signify *divers kinds of baptisms*, or *baptism of divers sorts*. If his word had been that the service consisted εν πολλοις or εν πολλοις βαπτισμοις it might have been mistaken for divers, that is *many washings in number*. But the word signifies *different in kind*." Wall's Defence, p. 122.

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And the same thing is shewn by the whole scope of the Apostle's reasoning in the text and context, which is to shew, that real expiation for sin could not be effected by any or all of the rites pertaining to external purification.

Luke xii. 50. "I have a baptism to be baptized with."  
(βαπτισμα δε εχω βαπτισθηναι.)

Mark x. 38, 39. Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? (και το βαπτισμα ο εγω βαπτιζομαι, βαπτισθηναι.)

The term under discussion is frequently repeated in these passages, but in a figurative sense. It seems in both to refer to trials of a dreadful and aggravated nature. Probably the idea of *overwhelming* sufferings is that which best explains it.

2. Where it is used *in reference to the rite of baptism*.

Some of the instances which fall under this head have been thought favourable to immersion, and others opposed to it. Those which belong to the former class have been supposed to indicate that the rite was performed by immersion, on *three* accounts;—

First, — From the *prepositions* used in describing it.

Matt. iii. 5. "And there went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan."  
"6. And were baptized of him [John] *IN* Jordan, confessing their sins."

Mark i. 5. — "And were all baptized of him *IN* the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 9. And — Jesus — "was baptized of John *IN* Jordan. 10. And straightway "coming *UP* *OUT* of the water, he saw the heavens "opened; and the spirit like a dove descending upon "him."

Matt. iii. 16. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went " *UP* straightway *OUT* of the water."

Acts, viii. 38. "And he [the Ethiopian eunuch] com-

"manded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him. 39. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, &c."

Great stress here is laid by Baptists upon the terms "in," "down into," "out of," &c. as favourable to the theory of immersion. The common impression upon persons of their persuasions, notwithstanding Professor Ripley's disclaimer upon the question, that these very terms express the act of going under, and coming up from under the water, and our opponent's language in reference to the point, however he may not have intended it, is calculated to strengthen that impression. "It is impossible," he says, "to read the above passages without feeling assured, that the ceremony which was performed in the river Jordan, to perform which the parties interested went *down into* the water, and after which they are represented as coming *up out of* the water, could be nothing less than bathing or immersing the whole person."\* We feel ourselves, therefore, called upon, in the first place, to apprise our readers, many of whom may not be able to consult the original, that these terms have no necessary connexion whatever with the process of immersion.

The first expression, *in Jordan*, may with propriety be rendered *at Jordan*. Thus, in Rom. viii. 34., Christ is said to be *at* the right hand of God, (*ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Θεοῦ*), and again the same word is used, Heb. i. 3. viii. 1. x. 12. where our translators have rendered it "*on*." In the same sense it appears to be used, Luke xiii. 4. where instead of "*in Siloam*" it should be *at Siloam*, for Siloam was

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet. p. 108.

a fountain. And we would suggest to our readers whether such an interpretation does not receive confirmation from the words of John, chap. i. ver. 29, where he says, "These things were done in Bethabara (*ἢ Βηθαβαρά*) beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing." The object in both cases appears to be, not to mark the *manner* of baptizing, but the *place at which* the rite was performed. \*

The other expressions, "DOWN INTO," "UP FROM," &c. it is fully conceded, do not mean the act of *going under*, and *emerging from* the water. Our opponents know, that in the cases above alluded to, the baptisms *followed* the act of going down into, and *preceded* the act of coming up from the water, and accordingly disclaim with some degree of indignation the idea, that they suppose these phrases to express the acts of plunging into, and emerging from the water.† They contend, however, that the *going down and coming up*, mean *going out a certain distance into the water*, and *coming back from thence to the bank*, and then ask, what did the parties do this for, unless for the purpose of immersion?

This appears to us, we confess, a slender basis to sus-

\* "What Matthew calls *ἢ Τορδαν*, in Jordan, John calls *ἢ Βηθαβαρά*, and expressly says it was *πέραν τοῦ Τορδανου* beyond Jordan; I do not say, at any distance from the river. I am willing to adopt Dr. C's translation of *πέραν* in Matt. iv. 15, and to say "situate on the Jordan;" but the phrase will not carry us one jot further than the margin of the stream." — So speaks Mr. Grenville Ewing in his "I say on Baptism" p. 81. It will be observed by those who consult the original that *εἰς* is the word used for "in" in Mark i. 9. which may likewise be rendered "at," as at Acts viii. 40.

† "Some persons," says Professor Ripley, p. 75, "may have cherished such a notion (viz. that the going down into the water was the act of immersion, and the coming up out of it again was the act of emersion), but how they could have acquired it is to me unknown; for our English version represents that the baptism took place *after* the descent into the water."

tain the confident assertion, that "it is impossible to read the above passages, without feeling assured that the ceremony performed could be nothing less than bathing or immersing the whole person;" for should we grant that the terms in question mean going out into the water and coming back from thence again, it would still be matter of mere conjecture, that the object of going out into it was for the purpose of total immersion. The parties baptized might, for any thing that appears to the contrary, have gone a little distance out from the water's edge, and still had the water poured upon the head from a ewer or basin, which was undoubtedly a custom in after ages.\* But proof is wanting to establish the fact, that the terms in question refer at all to the going out into the water, and coming back from thence. It is far more probable that they mean *going down to the water's edge, and coming up the bank from thence*, after the ceremony was performed. The verb which expresses the act of ascending more properly accords with this construction, and other considerations strongly favour this view. Without multiplying proofs upon the subject, we may briefly remark, that the preposition employed by Matthew and Mark, in describing their Lord's return from the place of baptism, clearly evinces that he retired *FROM* the water, and not *OUT OF* the water as it stands in our translation.†

\*There are extant pictures and representations of baptisms performed in this way, which have been taken from cemeteries and catacombs, and some of which have been supposed to be as ancient as the sixth century. One of these represents Jesus standing in the Jordan, immersed as high as the waist, and John the Baptist standing on the shore, holding a basin in his hand, on which fire is represented as flowing down from Heaven, while Jesus is affused with the water which descends from the basin. See an interesting account of these by Professor Stuart. Bib. Rep. x, p. 374, 375.

†The phrase "coming up out of the water" certainly conveys

And with respect to the Ethiopian, it is worthy of notice, that the *place* where his baptism was performed was the *desert* between Jerusalem and Gaza,—not a scene to expect rivers and pools of water, for these render the surrounding country verdant and habitable, but a situation where possibly in some valley or ravine a fountain or spring might be found. These and other considerations, which might be named, induce us to believe, that the going down and coming up expressed in those passages have no reference whatever, either to immersion itself, or to the going out into the stream or river for the purpose of immersion.

Secondly, — From the *place* selected for performing it.

John iii. 23. "John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, BECAUSE there was MUCH WATER there : and they came and were baptized."

"Here" says our opponent, "the quantity of water in Ænon, is mentioned as the reason of John's baptizing there.\* True, indeed; but it is not said that this quantity of water was needed for the purpose of *immersion*. "There is not the least need of supposing that the mention of much water, or many springs or streams of water, had any reference to the particular mode of baptism. For whatever the mode might have been, a large supply of water was indispensable to such a concourse of people ; and such a supply could be obtained in only a few places in that country. But who can suppose the waters of Ænon were resorted to for the simple purpose of

the idea of *emerging from the water*, whether it be a partial or a total emerging. But the preposition "απο" will not allow such a construction. "I have found," says Professor Stuart, "no example where it is applied to indicate a movement *out of* a liquid into the air."—*Bib. Rep. X. p. 320.*

\*Mr. C.'s Pamphlet, p. 108.

baptizing, when three thousand were in one day baptized by the Apostles even at Jerusalem, in the driest season of the year.”\*

Thirdly. From the *figure* employed in alluding to it.

Rom. vi. 3—5. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore *we are buried with him* by baptism into death; that like as Christ *was raised up from the dead*, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”

Col. ii. 11, 12. “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ: *buried with him in baptism*, wherein also ye are *risen with him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

“Almost all critics,” we are told, “of any celebrity, have admitted that in both these passages there is an evident allusion to the original mode of baptism, by immersing or burying the body in water.”† We freely grant that many eminent writers have regarded them in this light. But it is true on the other hand, that some, whose critical powers cannot be questioned, have taken a different view of them. The Apostle here institutes a comparison. One part of it is obvious enough; it is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The question is, What is the other part of it? Is it the plunging the body of the baptized person beneath the water, and raising it up from thence? Or is it the *moral death of sin in our hearts*, and our *moral or spiritual*

\*Lectures on infant baptism, by L. Woods, p. 154.

†Mr. C's. pamphlet, p. 112.



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*Resurrection to a new life?* If the latter was the comparison the Apostle meant to institute, then the argument for immersion derived from this passage must be surrendered. There would in that case be no allusion in it whatever to the mode of administering the baptismal rite. Are there then any reasons to believe that this latter view of the passage is the correct one? In favour of it, it has been urged that the resurrection, in the latter part of Rom. vi. 4, is a moral and spiritual one, being a resurrection, not from water into air, but from sin to a new life; and that, consequently, the antithesis plainly requires us to understand the death and burial in the former part of it, in a moral and spiritual sense also. The parallel passage in Colossians, where the same comparison has been employed, is appealed to, as shewing more plainly the spiritual character of this resurrection; for it is there affirmed to be a resurrection "through faith of the operation of God," which must of course be a spiritual one. It has been further urged in support of this view, that the words "we are buried with him," Rom. vi. 4. are plainly equivalent in sense to the words "if we be dead with him," v. 9, where the antithesis still points to a spiritual resurrection, and that the whole is summarily explained in v. 11, by the terms "*dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God.*"\* Other reasons have been offered in support of this view, which are not perhaps of equal weight, and to which such answers have been given, as appear upon the whole satisfactory: but the above reasons do not seem as yet to have been fairly and fully met; on the contrary, all that has been offered in the way of reply only tends to show more strongly the real strength of this view of the case. It is said, for example, that in Rom. vi. 4, the corresponding idea of a

\*The reader will find these arguments more fully stated by Professor Stuart. Bib. Rep. X. p. 327—332.

physical resurrection, in the latter part of the verse, though not expressed, may be supplied by the imagination.\* True; but the parallel passage in Colossians puts this imagination to flight, for it expresses the corresponding antithesis in terms which prove it to be not a physical but a *spiritual* one; and so, in truth, do the several verses in the context, Rom, vi. 3, 11, &c, already alluded to. The attempt to destroy the parallelism between verses 4 and 8, by assigning a different meaning to the words "if we be dead" in the latter, and a different reason for their introduction, is, we think, extremely feeble.† Another objection to the idea of a spiritual interpretation of the phrase "we are *buried* with him," is drawn from the words "by baptism," which stand in connexion with it. It is contended that the words mean "*by* baptism," and not "*at* baptism," and, consequently, that baptism was not merely the *occasion*, but "*the very instrument by means of which* we were buried."‡ The force of this reasoning we do not perceive; for, if it should be granted that the passage means buried *by baptism*, as the means or instrument, the meaning will still be, we presume, not that we are *really* buried, but buried *emblematically*; but this we may be by baptism as the means or instrument, whether it be administered by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling. The simple application of water as an emblem of spiritual cleansing will amount to this, and fully justify the expression, without supposing any resemblance between the mode of administering it, and the mode of entombing a lifeless body. These objections to understanding the passage as referring to a spiritual rather than a physical death and burial, do not appear of sufficient weight to counterbalance the evidence in favour of such an interpretation. To accomplish this,

\*Ripley, p. 89.

†Ripley, p. 91, 92.

‡Ripley, p. 86.

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every argument in support of this view ought to be fully and fairly met. To warrant the conclusion that immersion was the Apostolic practice, the passage ought to be shewn to contain an undoubted allusion to this practice. Nor would this prove that immersion was the only valid mode of baptism, unless from other sources it could be clearly shewn, that the Apostles practised no other, and that Christ intended to enjoin this particular mode. But, so far from this being the case, we feel assured that many passages in the New Testament clearly indicate a different practice.

Various authorities are appealed to by our opponent, upon the texts under review, to shew that Pædobaptists of high celebrity have regarded them as referring to immersion. They have so. Dr. Wall, the most learned among them upon this particular question, speaks decisively upon this subject. We wish, however, that Dr. Wall's opinion should be fully, not partially, stated, and therefore give the entire passage, of which our opponent presents only an abridgement. His language is as follows:—

"As to the manner of baptism then generally used, the texts produced by our author, and by every one that speaks of these matters, John iii. 23, Mark i. 5, Acts viii. 33, are undeniable proofs that the baptized person went ordinarily into the water, and sometimes the Baptist too. We should not know by these accounts whether the whole body of the baptized was put under water, head and all, were it not for two later proofs which seem to me to put it out of question. One, that St. Paul does twice, in an allusive way of speaking, call baptism a *burial*; which allusion is not so proper, if we conceive them to have gone into the water only up to the arm pits, &c. as it is if their whole body was immersed. The other, the custom of the Christians in the near succeeding times; which,

being more largely and particularly delivered in books, is known to have been generally, or ordinarily, a total immersion of the naked body; and that, as this author observes, and I had shewn, thrice repeated. But no man will pretend that this practice has limited and determined the sense of the word baptize to all these circumstances. Mr. Gale himself would not have it limited to a total immersion; nor most of the Minnists. This was the way ordinarily used. But none of these evidences does evince that it was the only way then used, without exception for any extraordinary case of sickness, tender constitution, coldness of season, or climate, or of haste, want of a sufficient quantity of water, and many other cases which may be supposed, or rather must be supposed, sometimes to happen.”\*

From the above quotation it is evident, that Dr. Wall did not believe that immersion was the only mode of baptism practised by the Apostles, and that his single reason from Scripture for thinking it the general one was furnished by these two passages, in which baptism, as he conceived, was compared to a burial. He remarks, however, upon the inconsistency of Baptists, in pressing this allusion so closely, but carefully abstaining from doing so upon other similar occasions, such as the comparison used in Colossians ii. 12; and adds, as a reason why we ought not to conclude from such passages as he had been alluding to, that the Apostles never, in cases of necessity, administered baptism in any other way, that it was not likely the ancient Christians would have done so, if they had not had reason to judge that the Apostles did so in similar cases.†

We turn next to those passages which have generally been considered as opposed to the idea of immersion. They may be ranged under three classes.

\*Wall's Defence, p. 131.

†Wall's Defence, p. 125.

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First. Where the term Baptism is used *figuratively*.

Matt. iii. 11, 12. “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”\*

This passage, we conceive, furnishes an irrefragable proof, that the term *baptize* does not necessarily convey the idea of immersion; that it is equally applicable, where the external mode is that of *pouring* or *affusion*; for it is plain to demonstration, that it is here used as descriptive of the communication of the Spirit, which was by pouring it upon the recipients, and not by immersing them in it. And the same remark may be made in regard to the expression “he shall baptize you with fire.” Our opponent conceives that the latter expression refers to the punishment of the wicked, who are to be immersed in fire; and such an idea has been suggested by others, but surely without due consideration.† The Baptist in this verse is stating the distinction between his own baptism, and that of Jesus; can it be imagined that he meant to represent the punishment of the wicked in hell, as a part of the latter? Was any intimation of this kind given to him from above, when he was divinely taught the distinctive character of the baptism of Jesus?‡ Or in any other part of Scripture where the baptism of Jesus is described, is there the remotest hint of the kind? On all

\*Parallel passages may be found in Luke iii. 16. Mark i. 8. John i. 32. 33. Acts i. 5. xi. 16. 1 Cor. xii. 13.

†Professor Stuart mentions this interpretation, as well as that we have given as the true one, without deciding between them.

‡John i. 32. 33.

such occasions, is not the entire stress laid upon the circumstance of its being a baptism with the Holy Spirit? And was not the obvious fulfilment of the words before us shewn on the day of Pentecost, when Jesus baptized his disciples with the Holy Ghost, descending in the form of cloven tongues, *like as of fire*?† Surely the allusion to the destruction of the wicked in unquenchable fire, in a subsequent verse, which appears from the whole tenor of the verse to be a description of other circumstances than what appertained to the baptism of Jesus, can be no sufficient warrant for the adoption of such an interpretation.‡ Objectionable however as this construction may be, it is far exceeded in this respect by our opponent's exposition of the words "he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." In order to retain the favourite idea of immersion in close connexion with the term baptize, he supposes that the disciples upon whom the Spirit descended at Pentecost were immersed "in the rushing mighty wind." It is difficult to speak with becoming seriousness of such an extraordinary suggestion. "Immersed in the rushing mighty wind!" Why the text says, "he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost!" Was the Holy Ghost the wind? Or is the Scripture so loosely worded that we may at pleasure substitute one of these terms for the other?§ How preferable upon this subject, are the judi-

\*See the parallel passages above referred to. †Acts ii. 3.

‡Dr. Campbell referring to the expression "with fire," v. 11, and to the very interpretation of it which our opponent has adopted, says—"the subsequent verse is certainly not to be understood as an illustration of this, but as farther information concerning Jesus. This verse represents the manner in which he will admit his disciples; the next that in which he will judge them, at the end of the world."

§He has rendered the concluding words of Matt. iii. 11, "*with holy wind and fire*," but this interpretation is ably refuted by Dr. Campbell.

ous remarks of Watson! "Our translators, in this passage, aware of the absurdity of translating the preposition *in*, have properly rendered it *with*; but the advocates of immersion do not stumble at trifles, and boldly rush into the absurdity of Campbell's translation: "I indeed baptize you *in* water; he will baptize you in the Holy Ghost, and fire." Unfortunately for this translation, we have not only the utter senselessness of the phrases *baptized, plunged* in the Holy Ghost, and *plunged* in fire, to set against it; but also the very history of the completion of this prophetic declaration, and that, not only as to the *fact* that Christ did indeed baptize his disciples with the Holy Ghost and with fire, but also as to the mode in which the baptism was effected; "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of *fire*, and it *sat upon* each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Thus the baptism of the Holy Ghost and with fire, was a descent *upon*, and not an immersion *into*. With this, too, agree all the accounts of the baptism of the Holy Ghost: they are all *from above*, like the *pouring out* or *shedding* of water upon the head; nor is there any expression in Scripture which bears the most remote resemblance to *immersing, plunging* in the Holy Ghost. When our Lord received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, "the Spirit of God descended like a dove, and *lighted upon* him." When Cornelius and his family received the same gift, "the Holy Ghost *fell on* all them which heard the word; and they of the circumcision that believed were astonished, because that on the Gentiles *also* was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost," which as the words imply had been in like manner "*poured out* on them." The common phrase "to receive the Holy Ghost" is also inconsistent with the idea of being *immersed, plunged* into the Holy Ghost; and finally, when St. Paul connects

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the baptism with water, and the baptism with the Holy Ghost, as in the words of John the Baptist just quoted, he expresses the mode of the baptism of the Spirit in the same manner: "according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Titus iii. 5, 6. That the mode, therefore, in which John baptized was by *pouring water upon his disciples*, may be concluded from his using the same words to express the *pouring out*, the descent of the Spirit upon the disciples of Jesus. For if baptism necessarily means immersion, and John baptized by immersion, then did not Jesus *baptize* his disciples with the Holy Ghost. He might bestow it upon them, but he did not *baptize* them with it, according to the immersionists, since he only "*poured it upon them*," "*shed it upon them*," caused it to "*fall upon them*," none of which, according to them, is baptism. It follows, therefore, that the prediction of John was never fulfilled, because, in their sense of baptizing, none of the disciples of Jesus mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles ever received the Holy Ghost, but by *affusion*. This is the dilemma into which they put themselves. They must allow that baptism is not in this passage used for immersion; or they must deny that Jesus ever did *baptize with the Holy Ghost*.\*

Secondly. Where the *circumstances* were such as to render immersion improbable.

Acts ii. 41. "Then they that gladly received his word "were baptized: and the same day there were added unto "them about three thousand souls."

The cases of baptism related in this chapter are of great importance, not only on account of their number, but be-

\*Watson's Theol. Institutes, p. 442.



cause this was the first occasion on which the Apostles administered this rite, under their commission to disciple all nations to Christ. The Spirit on this day was poured out upon them. Multitudes were drawn together by the event. Peter preached to them the Gospel, and three thousand were awakened to inquire into the way of salvation. The whole of them were baptized on that day, and became members of the Christian church. The place and manner of the baptism are points of interesting inquiry. There is no reason to suppose that the streams or brooks in the vicinity of Jerusalem furnished the means of administering this rite. The period of the year is against such a supposition. It was in the latter part of May, a season of drought in that climate. Neither Kidron on the East of Jerusalem, nor the brooks supplied from the Fountain of Shiloh or Gihon, on the West, would be adequate for it without special preparation; and the total absence of any hint or suggestion that the multitudes resorted to any place of the kind, increases strongly the improbability.\* Nor does there seem any great likelihood that they resorted to baths on the occasion. Many of them were foreigners;—could they, or could the Apostles, despised and persecuted by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, be supposed to have a number of these at command at an instant's warning? or could the time for seeking and resorting to them be spared? Peter commenced his address to the multitude at nine in the morning, and if you suppose the process of baptism to have commenced an hour afterwards, and been carried on by each of the Apostles incessantly during the remaining eight hours of the day, each Apostle must have baptized two hundred and fifty persons in four hundred and eighty minutes, which does

\*See these points more fully stated, Bib. Rep. x. p. 232.

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not allow two minutes for each baptism, or a single moment's respite, or even an instant for an enquiry into the faith or penitence of those converts. Does it seem probable that, under these circumstances, the laborious process of immersion was adopted? For ourselves we freely confess, that after all the ingenuity that has been exerted upon this point by calling in the aid of the seventy disciples, by supposing the Apostles to have continued their work of immersion by the light of the moon, or torches, or to have baptized at the rate of sixty-six in forty minutes, in order to complete their laborious task ere the day departed; after all the suppositions which may be made about the facilities afforded by public baths, or the pool of Bethesda, and a variety of other topics connected with the important transactions of that day,\* we take up our Bible, and read the 2d of Acts, and lay it down again, under the strong conviction that there were no immersions on this occasion. This may be prejudice, or the result of what is termed mere "childish reasoning," but it is nevertheless the honest persuasion of our hearts, and by that persuasion we must be governed, until it pleases God to alter it.

Acts x. 46, 47, 48, "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized, in the name of the Lord."

The case of Cornelius and his friends furnishes another instance where we should naturally conclude from the sacred narrative, that baptism was administered without immersion. While Peter addressed the company assembled at the house of Cornelius, the Holy Ghost fell on all

\*Mr. C's pamphlet, p. 118.

them that heard the word. Upon the discovery of this fact, Peter immediately demanded, "can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?" Observe, he does not say, can any man forbid the bath, the river, or even the *use* of water; but can any one forbid *water*. The intimation seems to be that they were to be baptized on the spot, and that water was to be brought for that purpose.\* The suggestion that this might refer to "the use of water for immersion,†" may be ingenious, and some such conjecture, we suppose, must necessarily be made by those who are determined to believe that immersion, and immersion only, is baptism; but we feel assured that the narrative is calculated to make a different impression upon the mind that reads it without bias or prepossession.

Acts xvi. 32, 33. "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he, and all his, straightway."

The Jailer's house and the prison appear to have been connected together. The latter, it seems, had an "inner prison," into which St. Paul and Silas had been thrust as a place of greater security. From thence the Jailer, under the first impulse of his convictions, "brought them out." "Out" *whither*? It is not said as at v. 40 "out of the prison;" nor is it said as at v. 34, that he brought them "into his own house." We repeat then the question, "Out" *whither*? By comparing v. 30, with what was said at vs. 23, 24, especially as it stands in the original, the impression naturally made upon our minds is, that it was from the "the inner" to the *outer apartment of the prison*. Here then, it seems, the interesting communication

\*See Bib. Rep. X. p. 334.

†Mr. C's pamphlet, p. 152.

was held with the jailer and the members of his family, who, from their own feelings of surprise, as well as the request of the jailer for lights, (*φωτα*. v. 29,) would naturally be led to assemble round the Apostles; and here, for aught that appears to the contrary, the jailer washed the wounds of Paul and Silas, and forthwith, (*παραχρημα*) together with his family, received baptism at their hands, perhaps with a portion of the same water that had been brought in to wash their wounds. Such, we repeat, is the natural impression made upon our minds upon reading the sacred narrative of these transactions. We do not say that it was impossible that there was some reservoir of water in the neighbourhood of the prison, or that the jailer and his family were plunged into it; but we do say, that the account before us leaves an opposite persuasion upon our minds. There is not the smallest hint afforded us that any transaction of the kind took place, and we cannot but feel the force of Professor Stuart's remarks, as to the idea of there having been a bath in the jail, "that mercy or convenience in a prison is a thing of modern times—the work or result of Christian beneficence, not of Pagan compassion.\*"

Thirdly. Where *the manner of alluding to the rite* appears to imply, that the peculiar form of immersion was not essential to it.

Acts xxii. 16. "Arise, and be baptized (*βαπτισαι*, baptize thyself, or receive baptism,) and WASH AWAY (*απολουσαι*, wash off) thy sins."

Ephes. v. 26. "That he might sanctify and cleanse "it by the WASHING (*λουτρω*) of water, by the word."

Titus iii. 5. "He saved us by the WASHING (*λουτρου*) "of regeneration."

members of his family, surprise, as well as the (a. v. 29,) would naturally apostles; and here, for the jailer washed the notwithstanding, (παράχρημα) baptism at their hands, water that had been Such, we repeat, is our minds upon read-nsactions. We do not re was some reservoir e prison, or that the nto it; but we do say, opposite persuasion smallest hint afforded took place, and we or Stuart's remarks, bath in the jail, "that s a thing of modern ian beneficence, not

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Heb. x. 22. "Having our hearts SPRINKLED (εσπραντισ-  
"μενοι) from an evil conscience, and our bodies WASHED  
" (λολουμένοι) with pure water."

It is generally conceded, we believe, by Baptist writers, as well as others, that these passages allude to the rite of baptism. In regard to the first, Professor Stuart remarks, "Here the words βαπτισαι and απολουσai appear to be treated as in a manner equivalent to each other; and the natural conclusion would seem to be, that *washing*, or *washing off*, was the manner of the baptism on this occasion;" and in reference to the last he observes, "the more natural understanding of the passage in this, as in the two preceding instances, would seem to be a *washing* with water."

"I have now," he continues, "examined all those passages in the New Testament, in which the circumstances related or implied would seem to have a bearing on the question before us, viz, whether the mode of baptism is determined by the sacred writers? I am unable to find in them any thing which appears to settle this question. I find none, I am quite ready to concede, which seem absolutely to determine that immersion was not practised. But are there not some which have been cited above, that serve to render it improbable that immersion was always practised, to say the least? I can only say, that such is my persuasion. The reader has the evidence before him, and can judge for himself. He will indulge me, I hope, with the same liberty. I do consider it as quite plain, that none of the circumstantial evidence, thus far, proves immersion to have been exclusively the mode of Christian baptism, or even that of John. Indeed I consider this point so far made out, that I can hardly suppress the conviction, that if any one maintains the contrary, it must be either because he is unable rightly to estimate the nature

or power of the Greek language; or because he is influenced in some measure by party feeling; or because he has looked at the subject in only a partial manner, without examining it fully and thoroughly.\*"

A word in regard to the Pædobaptist authorities, quoted in favour of immersion, and we shall then pass on to the evidence of history upon the subject.

One of the authorities referred to is the celebrated Dr. Campbell, Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen, to whom we have already alluded. In his notes on Mat. iii. 11, he remarks as follows. "The word baptize, both in Sacred writers, and in classical, signifies to dip, to plunge, to immerse, and was rendered by Tertullian, the oldest of the Latin fathers, 'tingere,'—the term used for dying cloth, which was by immersion." The Dr. might have added, that, by this same Tertullian, it was also rendered by the frequentative verb, "mergitare," with a view to preserve an allusion to the trine immersion in baptism. But we presume that none of our Baptist opponents would place much reliance upon his philological powers in this instance. "Nothing," says Mr. Ewing, "but the celebrity of Dr. Campbell, and the satisfaction of obtaining a concession from a man supposed to be an opponent, can account for the eulogies pronounced on his notes on Mat. iii. 11, and Mark vii. 3, 4. After all, what has he done in them towards ascertaining the meaning of βαπτίζω? Has he illustrated its various acceptations? Has he given any induction of examples, scriptural or classical, for the translation he has preferred? He has done nothing of this kind, on this subject, in any one passage in all his works. What then has he done? He has appealed to one of the worst authorities among the Fathers of ecclesiastical antiquity, and to one of the worst authorities among com-

\*Ibid, p. 337.

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Another Pædobaptist authority referred to upon the meaning of the term baptize, is the often quoted Dr. Wall. In his "Defence," p. 407, he very strongly urges upon the ministers of the Church of England, their obligations to obey the rules of their church, and also of studying the force and meaning of the term *baptize* itself. His language on this occasion is a striking proof of his candour and faithfulness, and, no doubt, implies that he deemed the practice of immersion to have been the ordinary practice of the Christian church, and that which ought to be adopted where peculiar circumstances did not authorize a departure from it. They, however, will greatly mistake, who are led to suppose from this, that this learned investigator of the subject supposed immersion to be essential to the validity of baptism. He not only believed *that* baptism to be valid baptism, which was performed by affusion, but contends, as we have already shewn, that in certain cases it was performed in this way by the Apostles themselves, and by the church in all ages; and, through sixty pages of the volume which contains the advice we have alluded to, pursues the argument to prove that the term "baptize" does not exclusively mean to dip, or immerse, but is repeatedly used in the New Testament to signify the act of pouring, and even in reference to the ceremonial sprinkling under the law.

The same remarks apply to the case of several other Pædobaptists who are quoted as the advocates of immersion. When the names of "Sotus," "Estius," "Taylor," "Rogers," "Towerson," "Whitby," "Barrow," "Leighton," "Calvin," "Witsius," "Alstedius," and many more are appealed to, as the strenuous supporters of im-

\*Ewing on Baptism, p. 103.

mersion, it ought in candour to be stated, that they do not assert this peculiar mode to be essential to valid baptism, but, by admitting exceptions, shew their belief to the contrary, and that, in general, their main objections are to sprinkling, rather than to affusion or pouring. But if all the persons here referred to, and a thousand more, had given their verdict, that the term βαπτίζω was applicable to immersion alone, could it determine this question in contradiction to the evidence which has now been laid before our readers? It is rather remarkable, that, while the authorities of Pædobaptists are quoted to prove that baptism must mean a total immersion of the thing baptized, one of the greatest champions of the Baptist cause has conceded that it may only mean a partial one, and that, without reference to the question whether the subject of baptism is put into the water, or the water comes over it. Mr. Gale, the celebrated opponent of Wall, says, p. 117. "The word βαπτίζω perhaps does not so necessarily express the action of putting under water, as, in general, a thing's being in that condition, no matter how it comes so; whether it is put into the water, or the water comes over it." Again, p. 139, "The utmost, I say, that could be inferred from this passage is only that the word does not always necessarily imply a total immersion, or dipping the whole thing spoken of all over, which I readily allow." And again—"Thus, to use the familiar instance I mentioned before, we say, Dip the pen, meaning only the nib of it, which we really dip into the ink. Though the whole pen is not dipped all over, yet the part particularly referred to is. And the pen may be truly said to be dipped, according to that known rule,—what is true of any one part, may be said of the whole complexly, though not of every part of the whole separately.

V. History does not shew that immersion was invaria-



bly practised from the first, or that it was deemed at any period essential to salvation.

A vast number of authorities are referred to by the advocates of immersion, to shew that this particular mode prevailed in the Christian church universally, for at least thirteen centuries after Christ. Instead of perplexing our readers with a close examination of the precise nature and value of these testimonies, we shall place the evidences from ancient history briefly before them, as the best of all possible modes of conveying a just idea of the case.

#### First Century.

One of the writers at the close of the first century appears to have *alluded* to this custom.

Hermas, Com. iv. cap. 3. "I have even now heard from certain teachers that there is no other repentance besides that of baptism, when we go down into the water, and receive the forgiveness of our sins; and that after that we must sin no more, but live in purity."

Hermas, Simil. ix. cap. 16. "For before a man receives the name of the Son of God, he is ordained unto death; but when he receives that seal, he is freed from death, and assigned unto life. Now that seal is the water of baptism, into which men go down under the obligation unto death, but come up appointed unto life. Wherefore to those also was this seal preached; and they made use of it, that they might enter into the kingdom of God."

These passages appear to allude to immersion, and, if so, would perhaps shew the existence of it at the close of the first century: for at that period it is generally believed that Hermas lived and wrote. We are aware, however, that our opponent in the present controversy assigns him a later date, and regards his testimony as unworthy of respect. See his note upon the subject, and reference to Mosheim, in his pamphlet, p. 92.

In connexion with this period we may notice a remarkable fact stated by Professor Stuart, viz. that the old Syriac version of the New Testament, the very oldest translation of it ever made, does not render in any instance the term βαπτίζω by a word which signifies to *immerse*, but by one which signifies to *stand, establish, or confirm*. This circumstance is the more remarkable, because the Syriac language has a word which signifies to *immerse* or *dip*; but this term is never once throughout the New Testament employed to translate the verb βαπτίζω. This old translation is called the Peshito, a word which signifies *right or exact*. "It was executed," says Mr. Horne, "if not in the first, at least in the beginning of the second century. All the Christian sects in Syria and the East make use of this version exclusively, and hold it in the highest estimation. Michaelis pronounces it the best translation he has ever read, for ease, eloquence, and fidelity."\* The inference which Professor Stuart draws from the fact, is that the translator of this version did not deem it important to designate any particular mode of baptism, by his manner of translating the term baptize.†

#### Second Century.

In the middle of the second century, we have one writer who is thought to *imply* that immersion was then practised, viz. Justin Martyr. Speaking of the baptism of the Christian converts, he says—

Apol. 1. "Then we bring them to some place where there is water (ἐν θύῃ ὕδατος) and they are regenerated by the same way of regeneration, by which we were regenerated; for they are washed with water (ἐν τῷ ὕδατι τοῦ λατῶν τοιμύται) in the name of God, the Father and Lord of all things, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit."

\*Introduction to the critical study of the Scriptures, by T. H. Horne, vol. ii. p. 208.

†Bib. Rep. X. p. 363.

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It will be observed, that, in the above passage, the persons baptized are said to be "*washed* with water," or perhaps, as the original stands, that "they wash themselves with water;" and the only reason we have to suppose that this washing was an immersion, is furnished by the circumstance of their being *first taken to a place where there was water*. This, as we have already shewn, is no *decisive* evidence of the point, but we are perfectly willing that it should give all the weight to that side of the question, which it is fairly capable of doing.

#### Third Century.

In the early part of this century, we have a clearer witness upon the subject, viz. Tertullian. What in the earlier writers is only conveyed by allusions or implications in him becomes more direct and unequivocal testimony. From several passages which might be given, we select the following as the plainest.

De Baptismo, § 2. "Let down into the water (in aquam demissus) and tinged (tinctus) between the utterance of a few words."

De Coronâ, § 3. "Thence we are thrice immersed (ter mergitamur), fulfilling somewhat more, (amplius respondententes) than the Lord has decreed in the Gospel."

The proof from the first passage depends upon the expression "let down into the water," for the following term which we have rendered "tinged," and which is repeatedly employed by Tertullian in reference to baptism, is equivocal in its meaning. The second passage, as our readers will perceive, refers to the trine immersion of the baptized, which Tertullian himself thinks was going a little beyond the Divine precept; and he might have made the same remark in reference to other ceremonial acts accompanying the rite at this period, such as exorcism, chrism, &c.

If these testimonies are thought sufficient to shew that immersion prevailed at this time, there are others equally decisive to prove that *certain exceptions were made* in this respect, that the rite was not *invariably* performed in this way, and that, by the ablest writers of the time, this peculiar mode was *not deemed essential*.

In the beginning of this century, Novatian, who was afterwards opposed to Cornelius as candidate for the Bishopric of Rome, was baptized by *affusion*, as he lay upon his bed in sickness. In the middle of this century, we have an account of a Roman soldier, who brought a picher of water for St. Lawrence to baptize him with. Eusebius also mentions the case of Basilides, who was baptized in prison, under circumstances which shew it was done by affusion. And, much about the same period, we have the following striking testimony of Cyprian, as to his judgment about the validity of such baptisms.

"You ask of me, my dear Son, what I think respecting those who have become subjects of divine grace in a state of languor and sickness; viz. whether they are to be regarded as lawful Christians, when they have not been bathed with saving water [immersed by baptism], but *perfusi, bedewed, affused*. In regard to this, let not our diffidence and modesty hinder any one to think according to his own opinion, and practise as he thinks. So far as my own humble opinion goes, I think the divine benefits [of the ordinance] are in no degree diminished or cut short [by any mode], nor that any thing of the divine bounty is at all diminished, where it [the ordinance] is received by the full faith of him who receives, and him who administers it. Nor do I think, that the contagion of sin is washed away by this salutary ordinance, [as the filth of the skin and body is by corporeal and secular bathing] so that there is any need of soap and other means, [or] of a

bathing-tub or pool in which the body can be washed and cleansed. The [physical] breast of a believer is cleansed in one way; the mind [or soul] of man in another way, by the deserts of faith. In sacred rites performed as necessity dictates, through divine mercy, divine favour is bestowed on those who sincerely believe. *Nor should any be troubled, because sick persons are SPRINKLED or AFFUSED, since they obtain the favour of God;* for the Holy Spirit saith by Ezekiel the Prophet: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you," &c. [Ezek. xxvi. 25.] So in the book of Numbers. "The man who shall be unclean . . . because the water of sprinkling is not upon him." And again: "The Lord said, the water of purification." And again: "The water of sprinkling is purification." [Numb. xix. 19, 20. viii. 7. xix. 12, 13.] Hence it appears that *SPRINKLING is of like value with the salutary bath* [*aquæ instar salutaris lavacri obtinere*]; and when these things are done in the church, where the faith is sound of the giver and receiver, *all is valid* [*omnia stare*], and may be completed and effected agreeably to the authority of the Lord, and the truth of faith [*majestate Domini et fidei veritate*]." Eph. 76, or 69.

About the prevalence of immersion after this period, no doubt exists. Basil, Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, and others, all declare the fact in the most decisive terms, and it is equally apparent, as we have shewn to be the case at prior periods, that other modes were occasionally resorted to, and were deemed, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, to be true and valid baptism. We might appeal in support of this statement to the decrees of the Council of Neocæsarea in 314, or of the Council of Laodicea, or to the testimony of Strabo in 349, or of Scotus in 1260, or various others; but no appeal of the kind can be required, after the strong and explicit

declaration of Cyprian in the middle of the third century, which exhibits at once his view upon the subject, and the Scriptural grounds of it.—“Sprinkling,” he says, “is of like value with the salutary bath, and, when these things are done in the church, where the faith is sound of the giver and receiver, ALL IS VALID.”

Now take this testimony precisely as we find it, give it its due weight;—and what does it amount to? Precisely to this, and nothing more,—that immersion was the established usage of the Christian church for many centuries, that it can be satisfactorily traced to a very early period, certainly to the third century, probably to the second, possibly to the first. At the same time it has been clearly shewn, that the practice, in this respect, was not invariable, that at every period other modes were employed in certain cases, and were regarded as equally valid where they occurred, though not equally allowable in all cases. Such is the result to which historical evidence conducts us, and we freely confess, that to our minds it presents the best argument which our opponents employ in favour of immersion as a general practice. If they are disposed to conclude from such evidence that immersion was practised in the Apostolic age, or even by the Apostles themselves, far be it from us to condemn either the conclusion or the premises upon which it rests. If such be the unfeigned conviction of their minds, we are more disposed to respect them for upholding and closely adhering to what they regard as established truth. But two enquiries we are constrained to make:—

First,—How can our opponents use this argument from history, with a real reliance upon its strength and validity, and yet refuse to admit the force and justice of it, when applied to the baptism of infants? The argument from history in favour of their admission to this sa-

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use this argument on its strength and force and justice of fauts? The argu- dmission to this sa-

crament is precisely the same in its nature with that which our opponents urge in favour of immersion. We appeal to the same authorities among the ancients; but to a greater number of them in the first three centuries; and the passages in their writings to which we refer are more decisive in favour of infant baptism, than any which they contain in favour of immersion. If Her- mas be not admitted as a witness, then is there none in favour of immersion until the close of the second century, but Justin Martyr; and the evidence from his writings is at best but a probable inference. But in behalf of infant baptism we have both Justin and Irenæus; the testimony of the former extending back to a period twenty or thirty years within the Apostolic age. In the third century, if Tertullian and Cyprian attest the prevalence of immersion, Tertullian and Cyprian also attest the prevalence of infant baptism. If the former says, the baptism of infants in certain cases may be deferred for a year or two; the latter says, that in certain cases immersion may be dispensed with altogether, and another mode equally valid be adopted in its place. In short, if exceptions can be found, where the children of Christians were not baptized in infancy, exceptions can also be found where Christian converts were not baptized by immersion; and if it can be shewn to be probable that immersion generally prevailed in the church for thirteen centuries after Christ; more certainly can it be shewn, by similar testimony, that infant baptism prevailed universally for fifteen centuries. Now, in common candour, ought not our Baptist opponents to admit the force of their own argument, when applied in a much clearer instance, and where there is a far higher degree of probability that there is no mistake in the application of it? Surely, if the early corruptions of the church can be supposed to weaken the force of this argument at

all, it must weaken it much more when applied to the *mode*, than when applied to the *subjects* of baptism. If we can suppose the church at that early period, suddenly and universally, both in its sound and its unsound portions, to have ventured upon innovation in what regarded the sacrament of baptism, it is much more probable the innovation would be an addition of a little water, than the addition of a class of persons who had never before been admitted to it, and who, as our opponents think, were most evidently in all respects disqualified for the reception of it. The distinction between copiously pouring water, and putting the subject into the water, was surely not as great as the difference between a being possessed of sense and reason, capable of reflection, faith, and repentance, and one who was absolutely destitute of all these qualifications. A little water might as well be added, as a little oil, or the sign of the cross, or any other matter of mere ceremony; and the very opinion, which our opponents assert to have prevailed at an early period, in regard to the saving nature of the ordinance, would be an inducement to extend its form, and make it as imposing in its aspect as possible; but can any man think with reason, that men of piety and candour, upon whose heads the Apostles had laid their hands, and while the instructions of the Apostles still sounded in their ears, and their practice was still before their eyes, should have consented in every part of Christendom, to admit infants to this sacrament, if they had never seen them admitted, or heard of their being so before?

Secondly,—We ask, how can our opponents plead the practice of the early church in the general use of immersion, and not at the same time acknowledge its authority in the evident exceptions to this practice? If they immersed in general, because the Apostles did so, is it not



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fair to conclude that they used sprinkling and affusion in certain cases for the same reason? If they called the ordinance *baptism* when thus administered, and regarded it as valid, is it not reasonable to think that it was so called and so regarded by the inspired messengers of Christ? If these ancient writers are credible witnesses in favour of immersion, are they not equally so in favour of sprinkling and affusion? If they had peculiar advantages for knowing what the Apostolic practice was in the one case, had they not equal facilities for understanding what the Apostolic usage was in the other? It seems the part of candour to admit this, and, if we admit it, we concede the main point at issue, viz. that baptism by affusion or sprinkling is true baptism, and that the peculiar mode of administering this rite is not essential to its validity.

Such is our full persuasion after reviewing the whole subject, and under the strong conviction that the testimony of Scripture, no less than of history, sustains this view of the case, we would earnestly recommend the members of the Church of England, who have received baptism at the hands of their ministers, whether by affusion or sprinkling, not to suffer their minds to be shaken by any confident or plausible assertion as to the invalidity of their baptism. If they are sufficiently in earnest to realize the great ends for which baptism was instituted, and to possess that internal cleansing by the Spirit of God, which it was designed to represent, they will never be excluded from Heaven, because the outward element has been applied to them less copiously than to some of their neighbours. At the same time let it be remembered, that as this is a point upon which great pains are taken to unsettle the minds of those who have been baptized by affusion or sprinkling, there is a remedy within their reach as regards their off-

spring, when presenting them for admission to this holy rite, viz. a simple compliance with the rubric of their Church, which evidently requires them to have their children immersed, except where they can conscientiously affirm that the child is too weak to sustain it. It is a great mistake to suppose that in ordinary cases the health of a child is at all endangered by this practice, and why, if it be the rule of their church, and can tend in any way whatever to useful ends, should it not be respected and adhered to? In saying this, we wish our readers to understand distinctly the grounds upon which we do it; that it is merely out of respect to the appointment of our church, and with a view to remove the scruples of those who may suppose that baptism ought always to be performed by this peculiar mode; and not because we think that baptism by affusion or sprinkling is at all less valid in the sight of heaven, than when performed by immersion. Our firm persuasion is, that the great design of the institution is answered by any of these modes, and that, independently of such rules as a particular church may form upon the subject, God has not circumscribed our practice in this instance. Such we repeat is our firm persuasion, and our reasons for it are *these*:--

1. We find that classical authors represent a thing as baptized *when the water flows in upon it*, as well as when the thing itself is plunged into the water.

2. We find that Origen calls the altar and sacrifice baptized, upon which *water was copiously poured*.

3. We find that in the Septuagint and Apocrypha, where it occurs four times, there is *only one instance where it probably means to immerse*; in the other three, it means *to wash, cleanse, overwhelm*.

4. We find that the instances in which this term is employed in the New Testament, present a construction

entirely different from that employed by classical writers when they use it to designate the idea of plunging or immersing.

5. We find that when used in the New Testament, without reference to the ordinance of baptism, it refers to the *various ceremonial ablutions of the Jews*, whether performed by *affusion* or *immersion*, *total* or *partial*.

6. We find that in no instance where it is applied to the ordinance of baptism, do the circumstances *certainly* shew that immersion was practised.

7. We find that by the phrase "buried with Christ," in Rom. vi., St. Paul probably refers to the *inward grace of baptism*, and not to the *outward form or mode of its administration*.

8. We find that in various instances of baptism recorded in the New Testament, the *circumstances* furnish a very high degree of probability that *they were not performed by immersion*.

9. We find this view of the case corroborated by the fact, that persons are said in the New Testament to have been *baptized* with the Spirit, upon whom the Spirit was *poured*, or *lighted*, or *sat*; and where the idea of immersion would be absurd.

10. We find it further strengthened by the repeated allusions to the rite of baptism, as a *washing with water*.

11. We find that even Mr. Gale admitted that the term *baptism* might only mean a *partial dipping* of the thing said to be baptized, or its being *under water*, *without reference to the way in which it came so*.

12. We find that, while the history of the primitive church leaves it doubtful what mode of baptism was employed immediately at the close of the Apostolic age, a celebrated version of the New Testament, which was executed at that period, and is at once the oldest and best that ever

was executed, does not in any instance render the word *baptize* by a term which signifies to *immerse*, though the language contains a term which has this express signification.

13. We find that, when subsequently immersion prevailed generally, in the Christian church, other modes of baptism were always adopted, where sickness or other causes rendered it expedient.

14. We find that, at the very period when clear evidence appears of its prevalence, we have the decided testimony of Cyprian, that *other modes were equally valid*, and that the same judgment is subsequently expressed both by individuals and councils.

15. We add, that if the Greek church containing forty six millions practise immersion, other churches amounting at least to *one hundred and eighty millions*, do not practise it; and if it be said the former comprises all the churches that have never been under the influence of the Pope, it must also be confessed that it comprises the most ignorant and vicious portions of the Christian world,

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## CHAPTER XI.

### ON THE DESIGN OF BAPTISM.

FROM the remotest ages, God has been pleased to convey instruction to men through the medium of some visible signs or tokens. This was the case even in Paradise, while man retained his innocence, and still more remarkably so in after ages. Positive institutions, under the Jewish economy, were numerous; but, under the Gospel, we have only two that are peculiar to the present dispensation, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These rites, however, are of the highest importance; they were both instituted by our Divine Master, under circumstances of no ordinary interest; they are both significant of fundamental truths, and designed to be instrumental in leading,

us to the richest blessings. The object of the present chapter is, to investigate the nature and design of Baptism, in order to which it will be necessary to regard this ordinance in a three-fold point of view—as an *emblem* intended to represent the most important truths—an *instrument* to lead us to the enjoyment of exalted privileges—and as a federal rite or *pledge* on the part of the Deity and his creatures.

I. We may regard baptism as an *emblem or memorial of important truths*, truths which ought ever to be cherished in the minds of God's people, and strikingly exhibited to the world.

1. Baptism is a constant recognition of *the guilt and pollution of our nature*. It indicates by a visible and expressive sign our need of spiritual cleansing. As circumcision instructed the Jew that his heart was polluted, so baptism teaches the Christian that he has that within which needs to be washed away. Nor can it be questioned that it answers this important end, in a very especial manner, when administered to infants. "Infant Baptism," as Dr. Wardlaw justly remarks, "contains a constant memorial of original sin, of the *corruption of our nature* being not merely contracted but *inherent*. Every time it is administered to an infant, it emblematically reminds all who witness it, of the truth expressed by the Psalmist, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." It teaches very simply, but very significantly, that even from the womb, children are all the subjects of pollution; that they stand in need of a participation in the pardon of the original apostasy, and of purification from the inherent depravity of their nature, in order to their entering heaven and seeing God."\* This testimony is true, and we may add that the church is deeply indebted

\*Wardlaw on Infant Baptism, p. 155.

to the practice of infant baptism, for the preservation of this important doctrine, in ages when fundamental points had not been defined with the same precision as at present. What a barrier did it prove in the fifth century against the heresy of Pelagius. All his efforts to disprove original sin were fruitless, while this ordinance could be pleaded against him. "If they are not diseased with original sin," said Augustine, "why are they carried to Christ the Physician to receive the Sacrament of their eternal salvation? Why is it not said to them in the church, Carry back these innocent creatures; the whole have no need of a physician?" The argument was unanswerable. It cut to pieces all the sophisms which learning and talents could supply. Particular texts might be evaded or explained away, but here was a standing ordinance, existing in the church from the days of Christ himself, the Divine authority of which had never yet been questioned, but which must be utterly without significance or design, unless the inherent depravity of the heart was admitted. And thus infant baptism remains at the present moment, and will to the end of time, a constant memorial of man's inherent depravity, a sufficient answer to all that Socinians can urge against this fundamental doctrine.

2. Baptism is an emblem of our *purification from the guilt and power of sin.*

Through the grace of God, the *guilt of our sins is remitted*, so that the justified soul is freed from its penalty, and dealt with as perfectly righteous. The outward worship of baptism exhibits to us this gracious act of divine mercy. Hence the language of Ananias to Saul, "Arise and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins.*"\* He did not, of course, mean to say, that baptismal water could *actually*

\*Acts xxii: 16;

wash away the sins of Saul, but the expression clearly implies that he regarded this ordinance as *the appointed emblem of that forgiveness*, which, through the grace of God, is vouchsafed to the soul.

But another essential part of our spiritual cleansing consists in the *renewal of the heart in the image of God*, in our *regeneration* by the Holy Spirit, and *progressive sanctification* under his influence. Baptism is the appointed emblem of this gracious change. It is on this account that our Lord connects together in his discourse with Nicodemus the being *born of water* and *born of the Spirit*,—\* the one the sign, the other the gracious change which it signifies; on this account that Paul speaks, in connexion, of “the *washing of regeneration* and the *renewing of Holy Ghost*,”† on this account that he says to the Corinthians, “Ye are washed, ye are sanctified,”‡ and again to the Ephesians, “Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.”§ It is not, as we have already suggested in another part of this treatise, merely that incipient work of grace, to which the term regeneration is usually appropriated, which this rite is the emblem of; but that entire work of spiritual cleansing which is comprehended under the terms regeneration and sanctification together; in other words, it is the whole grand effect of the Spirit’s agency upon the soul, in preparing it for admission into the pure regions of heaven.

Nor is it alone the cleansing *effects* of Divine grace, but the *sacred agent* that produces them, as well as the *manner of imparting his influences*, that are represented to us by the baptismal rite. Water, as the universal purifier, and means of refreshment in a physical sense, is an

\*John iii. 5.

†Titus iii. 5.

‡1 Cor. vi. 11.

§Ephes. v. 25, 26.



apt emblem of the Spirit of God, whose operations sanctify, refresh, and invigorate the soul. The Prophets teach us this, when uttering their predictions in reference to the Gospel day. Thus in Isaiah we read, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."\* So in Ezekiel, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; I will put my Spirit within you.†" This figurative language, borrowed from the legal ceremonies of purification, is evidently transferred to the pages of the New Testament. The selection of water as the element to be employed in the administration of baptism, was in order to bring before our minds the sacred agent whose operations we are to seek and cherish; and the very expressions, which present to us the manner of imparting his influences, appear to be borrowed from the custom of pouring out the water upon the heads of those who received this ordinance. The language in Titus, where, after alluding to the outward rite as "the washing of regeneration," the inward grace, viz, the Holy Ghost, is said to be "shed on us," (literally *poured out upon us*) appears to be a direct allusion to this circumstance, and the same impression is left upon our minds by various parallel passages, to which reference has already been made.

II. Baptism may be regarded as a Divinely appointed instrument or medium of introducing us to important privileges and blessings.

1. By this rite we are *initiated* into the visible church of Christ.

Nothing less than this can be inferred from our Lord's emphatic declaration, that "except a man be *born of water* and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

\*Isa. xlix. 3.

†Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 27.

The being "born of water" is necessary for an entrance into *the kingdom of God on earth*, i. e. the visible church of Christ; and the being "born of the Spirit," for our admission to the *mystical church*, the blessed company of all faithful people on earth and in glory. The former point, viz, the necessity of outward baptism for an admission to the visible church, is also announced in the very terms of the institution itself, which requires the Ministers of Jesus, to "*disciple all nations, baptizing them;*"\* and the latter is expressed by Paul when he says, "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body."† For this reason baptism is rightly termed "a badge or token of our Christian profession," for it is certainly "a sign of distinction and mark of difference,"‡ by which a member of the visible church is distinguished from others of every name and description. Having been baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he is thereby dedicated to the service and sealed as the worshipper of the ever blessed and eternal Trinity.

2. This rite is likewise the *medium*, through which we attain to *many spiritual blessings*.

It is one of the *divinely-appointed means* of attaining those very privileges of which it presents to our view so striking and significant an emblem. The due observance of this solemn ordinance is connected, in the promises of God, with the forgiveness of sins, the influence of the Spirit, and the hope of salvation. Its connexion with forgiveness is shewn by the language of Peter on the day of Pentecost. "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, *for the remission of sins.*"§ The same passage also shews its connexion with the influences of the Spirit; for St. Peter adds, as the consequence of

\*Matt. xxviii. 19. †1 Cor. xii. 13. ‡Article xxvii. of the Church of England. §Acts ii. 38.

their compliance, "and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Equally clear and express are the passages which shew its connexion with *salvation*. Our Lord says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Peter says, "Baptism now saves us.†" Paul says, "According to his mercy *he hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration.‡*"

We do not, of course, infer from these passages, that these blessings are so connected with the outward rite of baptism, that it must of necessity convey them; or that they cannot in any instance be enjoyed without it. God, in his sovereignty, may dispense them to whom he pleases, independently of this, or any other external medium; and man, in his blindness and guilt, may so participate in this ordinance, as to lose all its attendant privileges. Still baptism, in its gracious design and due observance, stands connected with these transcendent blessings,—so connected with them, that they who rightly receive it possess them, and they who despise or abuse it possess them not.

III. The reason of that connexion to which we have referred is at once apparent, when we reflect that baptism partakes of the nature of a *federal rite*, conveying, on the part of God, a faithful *pledge* to bless the due recipients of it, and, on the part of the recipients, a solemn promise, expressed or implied, of full obedience to the divine law.

1. It is a *pledge of mercy* on the part of God. It is a visible token by which he declares his gracious design towards us; a seal by which he confirms that design, and binds himself under solemn engagements to enrich with the blessings of his covenant all the true members of his church. In this respect, baptism is strictly analogous to those external signs or tokens, which God, in previous ages, has employed for the instruction of man. The

\*Mark xvi. 16.

†1 Peter iii. 21.

‡Tit. iii. 5.

Tree of Life was probably intended to be a pledge to Adam, on the part of God, that, if he obeyed the divine will, he should live forever\*. The sacrifices at an after period were a pledge of future mercies.† The rainbow in the covenant with Noah was a pledge of God's determination not again to destroy the earth.‡ Circumcision was a token of the covenant between God and his people, a pledge of his willingness, while they adhered to that covenant, to invest them with all the privileges contained in it§ ; and thus the initiatory rite of Christianity is an appointed sign of God's willingness to bless those who rightly receive it with all spiritual blessings in Christ. And why should not such a pledge be given in regard to infants, under the Christian, as well as under the Jewish economy ? The Jewish church was, in this respect, a type of the Heavenly church. Its vital members were believing adults, and their infant offspring. But the Christian church is also a type of the Heavenly church. Why then should this alone be imperfect in this instance, and exhibit to the eyes of its believing members no visible pledge that their offspring are to share the transcendent privileges of the church in glory ?

2. Baptism, as a federal rite, must also be viewed as *a pledge of obedience on the part of man*; a seal, on his side, affixed to the promise, by which he surrenders himself to the service of his Maker. Circumcision, under the former economy, was a pledge of this description, and therefore we hear St. Paul affirming that "circumcision verily profiteth, *if thou keep the law*;"|| and again, "I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to keep the whole law."¶ Baptism, in this, as in other respects, closely corresponds in its design with the

\* Gen. ii. 9. † Comp. Gen. iv. 4. and Heb. xi. 4. ‡ Gen. ix. 6—17.  
§ Gen. xvii. 11. || Rom. ii. 26. ¶ Gal. v. 2.

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† Gen. ix. 8—17.  
 † Gal. v. 3.

Jewish dispensation. In this rite we become solemnly bound, to "put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness."\* We therein profess ourselves to be "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ;"† and we are said to be "buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."‡ Now we believe it to be important in the education of a Christian child, to impress upon the mind as soon as reason dawns, that such a pledge has been given in his behalf, that such obligations belong to his condition as a member of God's church, that such distinguishing mercies have been freely bestowed upon him by the grace of God, and that such inestimable blessings await him, if he should prove a true and vital member of Christ. It is thought by our opponents, that the performance of the baptismal ceremony at an adult age must leave an abiding impression upon the mind. We grant that in many instances this may be the case, but, at the same time, we are persuaded that the steady and earnest enforcement of Christian duties, as the result of mercies already received through grace, is likely to produce in the heart of a child impressions quite as deep and salutary in their character, quite as strong and lasting in their effects.

From the preceding remarks, our views of the nature and design of Christian baptism may easily be collected.

We regard it as *the application of water to a person, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by a duly authorized Minister of Christ; and as designed to be a standing recognition or emblem of essential truths; a means of admis-*

\* Eph. iv. 22, 23.

† Rom. vi. 11.

‡ Rom. vi. 4.

sion to important blessings; and a federal pledge, on the part of the Deity as well as of man, of mercies on the one side, and of allegiance on the other. If these views can be shewn to be in any essential point unscriptural, we shall be truly happy to correct them, but until they are so, we are constrained to regard those opinions which are directly opposed to them, as destitute of the seal of truth.

1. The views expressed by our opponent on this point appear to be of this description; we cannot regard them in any other light than as partial, defective, and erroneous.

He has commenced by defining baptism to be "a rite appointed to accompany the first open acknowledgment of faith in Christ."\* Two serious objections to this definition immediately present themselves. First, it is not proved or supported by a single illustration from Scripture. In *not one* of the instances referred to by our opponent is there *any public avowal of faith in Christ recorded*, unless the act of baptism itself be regarded in this light, which would not sustain the definition in question. John's disciples, indeed, "confessed their sins," but this was *not a public avowal of faith in Christ*. Jesus "made and baptized disciples," but it is not said, the disciples *publicly avowed their faith in him*. The three thousand at Pentecost on gladly receiving the word were baptized, but it is not said that they made a *public avowal of their receiving it, or believing in Christ*. Whatever may have been the case in these instances, the passages in question are totally irrelevant as proofs. We are referred to them as evidences of the fact that baptism always stood in connexion with the *first public avowal of faith in Christ*, but they contain neither record nor proof of any such avowal whatever. We repeat, then, the assertion, that the definition given of baptism by our op-

\*Mr. C.'s pamphlet, p. 152.

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ponent stands, as far as his remarks are concerned, without a shadow of proof to sustain it. But we go further:—it is not true in point of fact, and therefore *cannot be proved*. It is fair to presume that some resemblance, at least, would be apparent between the outward rite and the chief design of its institution. But what analogy or resemblance is there between an *external profession of faith*, and the outward application of water, whether by *immersion*, *pouring*, or *sprinkling*? Far more consistent with truth would it be to assume the *converse* of this definition, and say that an outward confession of faith was appointed to accompany the rite of baptism. Yet as a universal proposition even this would be untrue, for it never could be shewn by fair induction of examples, that such was universally the case in point of fact, and much less that it was appointed and required to be so in every instance by the Author of this institution.

Baptism is next described by our opponent, as "*a sign of salvation*."\* This definition requires to be itself defined, in order to render it intelligible. What are we to understand by the term "*salvation*," as here employed? Does it mean a glorified state? Or what is sometimes styled a *state of salvation*, i. e. a justified and regenerate state? If the latter, as we presume from the subsequent remarks, then it is only a different mode of describing what we believe to be true, that baptism is a symbol both of remission and regeneration. To describe it, however, as "*a sign of salvation*," in order to express this truth, is certainly not the most happy mode of representing the matter; nor is the proof by which this view is sustained more satisfactory than the description itself. The authority appealed to is 1 Peter, iii. 21. and the reasoning from it stands thus:—Baptism here is by metonymy put for the

\*Mr. C.'s pamphlet, p. 153.

thing signified by it. The thing signified is "the answer of a good conscience." This answer of a good conscience is "the positive effect of salvation." Therefore baptism, which is the symbol of this effect, may be termed the sign of salvation. A laboured process indeed to prove what, after all, St. Peter probably never contemplated; for it appears from a close inspection of the passage, that he is not here speaking of baptism as a symbol, but as an *instrument*, comparing it with the Ark which was the means of preservation to Noah, as baptism now, in the hands of the Spirit, is one of the appointed means or instruments of our salvation. He does not in this passage call baptism "a sign," but an "antitype," and refers us for the corresponding type not "to the answer of a good conscience, but to the "Ark."\* He then adds the words, "not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God," not to explain what he meant by the *term baptism*, but to show the *circumstances* under which baptism is thus instrumental in saving us; viz, when accompanied with the demand or answer of a good conscience. Dr. Doddridge thus expresses the meaning of this passage: "The antitype to which doth now save us, or is the *instrument* of our safety and preservation, as the Ark was of theirs: I mean baptism, whereby we are received into the Church, and numbered amongst the heirs of salvation."

We are next informed that our Lord adverts to baptism in both these views, when he says to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."†

But how does this appear? Our Author explains his views of the case. He supposes that Christ here places together the being "born of water" and "born of the Spi-

\*See the original of 1 Peter, iii. 21. †Mr. C.'s pamph. p. 153.



rit;" i. e. the *sign* and the *thing signified*, because the being born of water was the authorized mode of *avowing* that we are born of the Spirit, and in a great measure a test of our being so.\*

But is this view of the case correct? Is our receiving the outward rite of baptism, in point of fact, a test of our having the inward grace? Is it really so in those communions where *adult baptism* alone is admitted? In particular instances, we doubt not, it may happen to be so, owing to the peculiar circumstances in which an individual or church may be placed, but that it would ordinarily be so, we are not convinced.

And is it strictly in accordance with truth to say, that baptism was designed to be an avowal that *we possess the inward grace* it represents? We think not. It is an avowal of a somewhat different thing, that we *need it*, that we *must have it*, in order to be saved; but not an avowal that we actually have it in possession. The grace it signifies is not merely that incipient principle in the heart, which would lead a man, however sincerely, to seek to dedicate himself to Christ in baptism, but, as we have already shewn, that entire cleansing of the soul from its pollution, which comprises the whole effect and agency of the Spirit of God upon it.—Our readers will not fail to notice also, that baptism was defined by our opponent to be a rite appointed to *accompany* the first open acknowledgment of faith in Christ; but here this ground is departed from, and the rite is regarded as being itself the avowal in question.

And what evidence have we that our Lord intended to allude to baptism in this particular point of view? One reason assigned is that "he could not mean to allude to it as possessing any saving efficacy in itself."† This sen-

\*See his pamphlet, p. 154.

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†Ibid, p. 153.

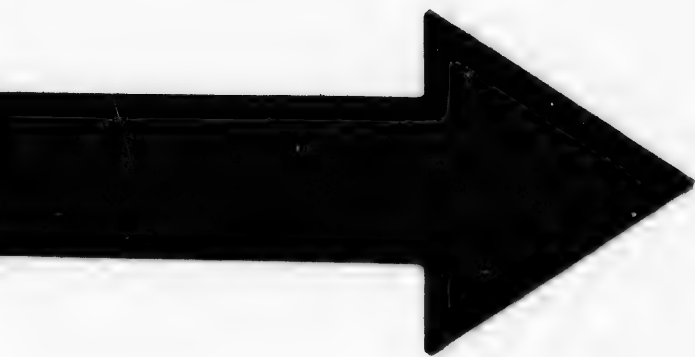
timent we cordially subscribe to, but how it proves the question at issue, we are at a loss to perceive; for surely there is a broad distinction between supposing that baptism has a saving efficacy in itself, and the regarding it as the means of admission into the visible church, as well as an emblem of the various blessings and privileges of the vital members of that church. This view of the nature and design of baptism fully explains the cause of our Lord's connecting together the sign and the thing signified in the passage before us. It is supposed, however, that Nicodemus shrunk from an open avowal of his faith in Christ, and that consequently our Lord's main object was to teach him the danger of this spirit; to show him that "unless he came to possess that pure heart which the Spirit of God creates, and *which would prompt him to avow publicly his faith*, he could not be entitled to be received into the communion of Christian disciples."\* The main object of our Lord, according to this explanation, was to fix the thoughts of Nicodemus primarily upon the importance of an open avowal of faith in baptism. We question the soundness of this view of the subject. It rests altogether upon the slender circumstance of Nicodemus's having gone to Jesus *by night*. There is not a hint throughout the whole conversation that our Lord meant to reprove him for cowardice, or to point his mind especially to the importance of openly confessing Him. The leading design of his solemn declarations appears to us rather to have been, to fix his mind upon *the necessity for being born of the Spirit*, and receiving, through his powerful agency, a new capacity to discern the essential nature and blessings of his kingdom; and baptism with water was alluded to, in connexion with this subject, because it was to be the appointed sign or symbol of this regener-

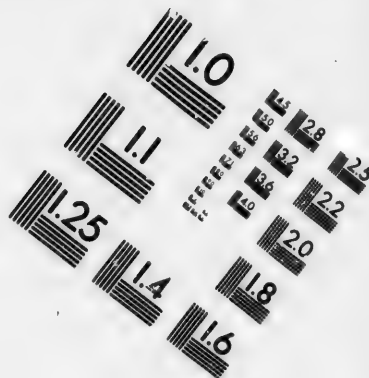
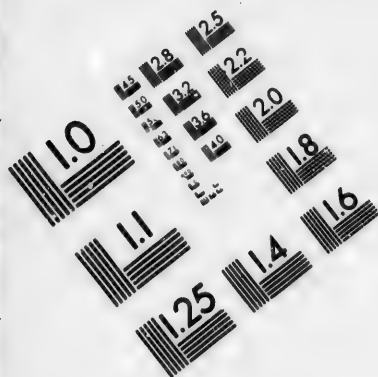
\*Mr. C's pamphlet, p. 154.

ation, as well as means of admission to the Christian church. Doddridge, to whom our opponent refers, certainly expresses the true view of the case. "Whosoever," he says, "would become a regular member of it [that is, the kingdom of God,] must not only be baptized, but as ever he desires to share in its spiritual and eternal blessings, *he must experience the renewing and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit on his soul.*"

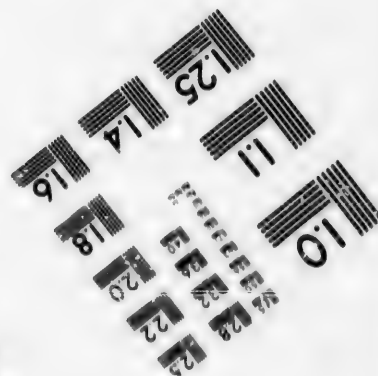
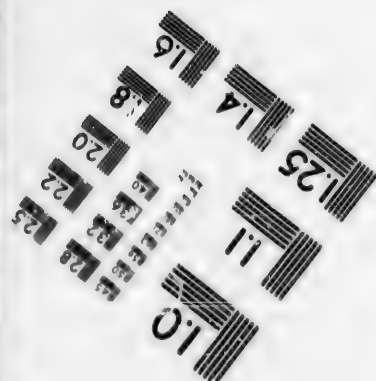
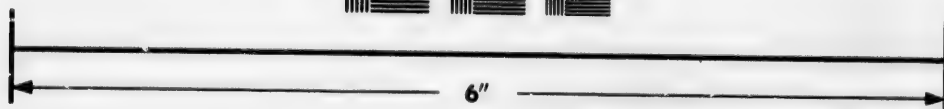
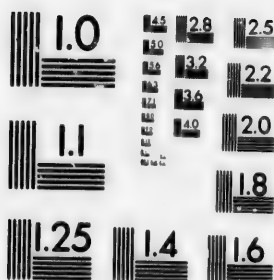
2. Having thus contrasted what we esteem the true and the false views of the design of baptism, we clearly perceive how great a mistake it is to imagine that the real design of this solemn rite is at all inconsistent with infant baptism! What part of its design as now described, or which of its ends as now detailed, is in the slightest degree at variance with this practice? Baptism is a memorial and emblem of important truths—of Original sin—of spiritual cleansing from its guilt and power—of the influences of the Holy Ghost. Is such an emblem inapplicable to infants? Is it improper to exhibit to the church or world, a sign that infants are born in sin—that they need the pardoning and sanctifying grace of God—that the Holy Ghost must regenerate their souls, to prepare them for heaven? Baptism is the rite of our initiation into the visible church, and stands connected by divine appointment with the spiritual blessings of forgiveness, regeneration, sanctification, and final glory. Is there any thing inconsistent in supposing, or objectionable in declaring, that an infant can share these privileges—that an infant can be a member of the Redeemer's fold below, as well as above, under the Gospel, as well as under the Patriarchal and Jewish economies—that an infant can be invested with the righteousness of Christ, renewed by the Spirit of holiness, and glorified in the presence of God? Baptism is a federal rite, pledging mercy on the one side, and ini-







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posing obligations on the other. Is it inconsistent with the known laws of the Divine government that God should hold out a pledge of mercy to the offspring of believers, or that he should bring that offspring under the bonds of his covenant, while they are still unconscious alike of its obligations and its privileges? We have shewn in a previous chapter that such a procedure is in most perfect harmony with those principles,\* and we are therefore assured that this part of the design of baptism is in no respect inconsistent with the state and circumstances of an infant. Let us not then wish to be "wise above what is written," or to substitute our views of God's institutions for those which his Bible discloses. His thoughts are not as our thoughts. For as heaven is above the earth, so far, in expansion, compass, wisdom, and benevolence, are his plans and counsels beyond ours.

3. How absurd, then, is it to charge upon this custom *the present corruptions of the Christian church!* If the practice be of God, it cannot be the source from whence evils and corruptions flow. Before we can admit such an idea, it must be clearly shewn to be contrary to the will of heaven. But what are the evils complained of?

First—We are told "it has entirely supplanted and destroyed the ordinance which the Saviour appointed."† This, however, is assuming the very point in debate, that infant baptism is not of Christ's appointment. We do not admit this; we are assured it is contrary to truth, and therefore cannot grant that it has supplanted the ordinance which the Saviour appointed. It has, to a great extent, superseded the baptism of adults in Christian countries, just as infant circumcision superseded the circumcision of adults among the descendants of Abraham; but in neither case has the ordinance of God been supplanted. Our op-

\*Chap. iv. p. 32, 33.

†Mr. C.'s pamph. p. 156.



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ponents are led into this mistake by supposing that the chief or only design of baptism was an open profession of faith; but this we have already shewn to be an error.

Secondly—We are told, that Infant Baptism has "occasioned the admission into the Church of vast multitudes of persons without repentance, faith, or religious character."\* Now if the Church in its best day had exhibited a perfectly pure aspect, if in Apostolic times its face had not been marred by such characters as are here described, the argument might have been urged with a better grace, but the state of the primitive Church, as will be shewn in a subsequent chapter, is a complete answer to this charge. It proves plainly that if the evils here lamented can only result from infant baptism, then the Apostles must have practised it, for these evils rapidly spread in the Church under their immediate superintendence. But let us look to those communions which discard the practice of infant baptism, and ask, are they free from such characters? Hear upon this point the ingenuous confession of a pious man, who from experience was well qualified to form a correct judgment of the matter.† "I was born a Dissenter; early in life my mind was deeply, and, I trust, savingly impressed with the necessity of true religion; and having found peace and rest in Jesus, I felt anxious to impart his salvation to others. I was educated for the Ministry at the Bristol Baptist College, then under the direction of the excellent Dr. Ryland; and for four years pursued, under the different tutors, that course of literary and theological study, which is usually taught in that Institution. Having completed my term, I was invited by Mr. Fuller, then in the decline of life, to be co-pastor with him at Ketter-

\*Mr. C.'s pamph. p. 157.

†The Rev. Thomas Blundel, formerly Baptist Minister at Northampton; now a Clergyman in the Church of England.

ing; but my theological tutor Dr. Ryland, wishing me to be fixed at Northampton, the scene of his own early ministry, and that of his father, I was induced to go thither, and after I had passed through the usual ordeal of a probation among the people for six months, I was chosen by the society as their Minister, and remained with them sixteen years. I would speak with affection and respect of the people amongst whom I formerly laboured, to many of whom I still feel a strong attachment; but I must aver that had I not been strongly prejudiced by early habits and associations, I must have been convinced that a *constitution of things, nourishing and perpetuating "debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, swellings, whisperings, tumults,"* could not boast of an origin exclusively scriptural and divine. I do not mean to imply that the church at Northampton was more subject to disturbances than other dissenting churches, situated in large manufacturing towns, and where elections are often fiercely contested; but it was with the utmost difficulty that I could preserve any measure of subordination and peace, and I am firmly persuaded that the popularity of church meetings, where every measure is canvassed and carried by a show of hands, is very inimical to the practice of piety, and to that 'meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.' Having, as I said, laboured sixteen years in the congregation, and a dispute relative to discipline arising betwixt two of the deacons who happened to have influence over many of the poorer members, and myself, rather than divide the church, a practice I always discountenanced, I voluntarily resigned my office, and left them. All this time I was a conscientious dissenter; indeed I feel it right to confess that *I was brought up in much error and prejudice in reference to the Established Church.* The Bible Society was the first means of disabu-

sing my mind of a portion of this prejudice, by bringing me into contact with many evangelical clergymen who were then connected with it, and *the constant feuds and factions amongst the heterogeneous mass of dissenters*, turned my attention more and more to the grounds and advantages of dissent; for I was convinced *that separation, if it did not insure greater purity, peace, and love, descended not from above.* I re-perused some works against religious establishments, but was not satisfied. I attended an annual meeting in London of the Society for promoting Ecclesiastical Knowledge; and though many dissenters of note were present, and advocated the Society, I was shocked and disgusted at the proceedings. I should call it a society for the propagation of infidelity, abuse, and scoffing. Formerly when the general church was in affliction, the primitive dissenters shewed their Christian love and sympathy towards their brethren; but these reminded one of the children of Edom, who said in Jerusalem's persecution, 'Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.' Being a member of the three denominations of Dissenters meeting at Dr. William's Library, in Redcross street, a discussion arose which gave me an opportunity of knowing the opinion of the great body of the ministers on the nature and constitution of a Gospel church; I was persuaded they decided unscripturally, and began to read again with care Milner's Church History, Newton's Apologia, Scott on the evil of Separation, Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, Burnett on the Articles, and *above all the New Testament, especially the Acts and Epistles*; and was impressed with the conviction, that *it was my duty to leave the dissenters, and dedicate myself to the service of the Church of England.* It has not indeed formed any part of my plan to eulogize the Church of England as perfect, but in conclusion I must affirm, that it appears to me

to be so happily framed as to combine in an admirable degree truth and liberty; a regard for the rights of God, and respect for the truest interests of men. While it maintains the sure doctrine of Christ, in its articles and creeds, checking, and, in extreme cases, punishing heresy, infidelity, and profanity in evil doers, it exercises perfect forbearance and charity towards all its opponents; it upholds with firmness and energy its own institutions, yet neither coerces nor condemns any, who, though they may differ from it, give proof that they act with sincerity. Dissenters themselves, did they duly reflect, would not seek its overthrow; for were they the majority, they could not consistently establish themselves; and *in vain will they look for a more firm, tried, and noble bulwark against the attacks of open infidelity and immorality on the one hand, or endless schisms and heresies amongst themselves on the other.*"

To this ingenuous statement not a single word need be added, except that we think it ought to lead that man to pause, who undertakes to denounce infant baptism as the grand cause of all corruption among professing Christians, as the remover of the bulwarks of Zion, the blender of the Church and the World, nay, the grand apostacy which has unchurched the whole of Christendom, except the small section of it that is occupied by persons of the Baptist persuasion.\*

It is a subject of deep regret and poignant sorrow to the pious heart to witness the formality and supineness that prevail among professing Christians. There are those who keenly feel this subject, and can say with one who mourned over the impieties of God's professing people in ancient times, "rivers of water run down mine eyes for the ungodly who forsake thy Law;" but they also feel that

\*See Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 158.

the remedy for these evils is not to be found in separation; it is not to be realized in the adoption of Baptist principles; for these principles, upon trial, have actually failed to afford it. It is to be found in the faithful exhibition of the truth of God to the heart and conscience, united with a spirit of prayer and a holy walk. Let those pious persons who find themselves surrounded by the careless, pursue this course with perseverance; let them be consistent and faithful, and we hesitate not to say, they will do in the end more good within the limits of the Established Church, than they will ever effect by separation from it. It is a fact which has been freely confessed by some of the most eminent dissenters in England, that the efforts of the Established Clergy have, within the last few years, been more widely blessed, that their communions have enjoyed more largely the sanctifying and saving influences of the Spirit, than any denomination of Christians whatever. There are many communities in fellowship with the Established Church of England which may be as truly designated "a congregation of faithful men," as any society on earth. Yet the Author of the pamphlet before us mistakes the meaning of that expression, if he supposes it was intended to imply that every member of such a congregation was a believer, in his sense of the term;\* and he still more glaringly misrepresents the case, when he terms the expression at the commencement of the Church Catechism, in which children are taught to say, they are made children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, "a popish senti-

\*" Church is a word which Art hath devised, thereby to sever and distinguish that Society of men which professeth the true religion from the rest which profess it not." Hooker's Eccles. Pol. Book. V. Sect. 68. By a "congregation of faithful men" the Nineteenth article means *a society of men who professedly adhere to the fundamentals of the Gospel.*

ment," and "enormous falsehood."\* "It is easy," as a talented clergyman has remarked, "to denounce the awful profaneness of calling every member of the Church of England a christian. It is easy to exclaim, with real or affected indignation, against the Babylonish abomination of teaching every baptized person to say, that he is a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. It is easy, by such a strain, to disturb light and ignorant minds, and supply a glad excuse to the disaffected : but it is not so easy to prove, that the practices so denounced are opposed to the word of God. Read St Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. Mark his mode of address. He salutes them as sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints. He thanks God on their behalf, for the grace of God which was given them by Jesus Christ, and assures them that God is faithful, by whom they were called into the fellowship of his Son. It would be difficult to devise expressions more strictly descriptive of real Christians, than these. And yet afterwards, without any systematic statement of a distinction between certain characters whom he did mean, and certain others whom he did not mean to include, he proceeds to reprove them as carnal, declaring that there was envying among them, and strife, and divisions. He condemns them as evil doers, and dishonest, defrauding their brethren. He exposes their abuses as profaners of the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper. And, finally, he argues with a mixture of indignation and sharp rebuke against some of them who were infidels, as touching the grand truth of the resurrection of the body. I shall not prolong this letter, by examining the *principle*, upon which a church so designated as saints is afterwards so reproved. It is to the *fact* itself that I beg to

\*See Mr C's pamphlet, p. 159.

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call your attention. 'The Apostle addresses in general terms, and without any caveat or distinction, as children of God, the whole Corinthian church, inclusive, as it afterwards appears, of immoral and irreligious characters. Is it therefore, I ask, so "obviously outrageously unscriptural" to address baptized persons generally, as children of God, and then to proceed to correct abuses among them, whether of faith or practice ?'"

But, thirdly, infant baptism, it is said, *practises deception upon the souls of men.*† It would be more just to say, men practise deception upon themselves by perverting it. And so men practice deception upon themselves by perverting adult baptism, so by perverting the Lord's Supper, and every other ordinance which Christ has instituted or sanctioned, and you might as well undertake to abolish the Sabbath, the Eucharist, and every ritual observance, because men pervert them, as to do away with infant baptism for such a reason. This practice is not, as our opponent affirms, the invention of man, but of God; and man will be responsible for the perversion of it; yes, and man will be responsible for all the contempt which is heaped upon it, and all the efforts to weaken the weight and authority which it has hitherto claimed in the Church. That it is not the invention of man, but has the sanction of God and his Christ, we are firmly assured, and the grounds of that assurance we shall now briefly sum up.

1. The command of our Lord to baptize all nations, was as much a command to *baptize infants as adults.*

\*See some judicious remarks upon this point in a little work entitled "Letters to a friend, who has thought it his duty to secede from the Church of England, by the Rev. Hugh M'Neile, M. A."

†Mr. C's pamphlet, p. 159.

2. At the first formation of a visible church, God ordained that *infants should be members of it.*

3. In making this appointment, he directed that *they should be formally admitted to it, by its initiatory seal,* just as older persons were, and evinced his deep displeasure when that ceremony was omitted.

4. He afterwards signified, in most express terms, his will that *infants should be members of his covenant,* and share in its temporal and spiritual blessings.

5. The invariable principle of the Divine Government, under every dispensation, has been *to connect infants with their parents in the participation of covenant mercies.*

6. In this, as in other respects, the visible church has in all ages been a type of the heavenly church. Why should we destroy the resemblance between the type and anti-type, precisely at the period when there is most reason to look for it? Infants in the church from Abraham to Christ, two thousand years—from Christ to the reformation, one thousand five hundred more—*out of one small part of it, from the reformation to the end of the world*—and then in the whole of it again from thenceforward to all eternity—is there not something inconsistent here?

7. In the New Testament, the language of our Lord, in regard to infants, shews they were *to occupy the same place in his church under the gospel as under the law.*

8. This conclusion also necessarily results from the fact, that *the nature and design of his church have been the same under both dispensations,* as well as *the covenant upon which that church is founded.*

9. The strict analogy between circumcision and baptism shews that the latter should be applied to *all that are entitled to be members of the Christian church, infants as well as adults.*

10. The language of the Apostles, addressed, and re-



ferring to young children in the different churches to which they wrote, shews that these children were baptized members of those churches.

11. St. Paul assumes, as a well known fact, their title to membership, and grounds upon it an argument in regard to the marriage connexion.

12. The practice of the Apostles, in administering baptism to the families of those who were converted to the faith, affords additional evidence that infants were baptized.

13. The practice of the Christian church from the very days of the Apostles down to the time of the reformation, in every country without exception, and among every sect of Christians, has been to baptize infants.

14. Men of learning and celebrity, who lived as near to the Apostolic times, as we do to the times of the reformation, declare, *they never heard of any, whether orthodox or heretical, who denied baptism to infants.*

15. History does not by any means afford so strong an evidence *that immersion was the primitive practice* of the church, and yet Baptists esteem *that evidence a good and valid one in its favour.*

16. The design of Baptism, when truly stated, shews that it ought to be administered to infants as well as adults. Whether we regard it as a *symbol*, an *instrument*, or a *pledge*, it is strictly applicable to their case.

17. The arguments, to which our opponents resort in defence of their principles, confirm us in the above conclusions, for they are obliged to deny that the whole Bible should be the standard of reference,—to identify the baptisms of Christ and John which were essentially distinct,—to apply passages of Scripture to infants which only refer to adults,—to sever God's visible church into two distinct churches,—to deny the sameness of the Abra-

hamic and Christian covenant—to reject many plain intimations in the New Testament, as to the relation in which infants stood to the church—to maintain an erroneous and contracted view of the design of baptism, and to withstand the overpowering evidence of the universal and constant prevalence of infant baptism, in the Christian church, for fifteen centuries after Christ. Ought the man who desires, to act consistently to give up his faith, his church, his communion, for such opinions as these?

By many, we entertain no doubt, that step has been taken with great sincerity, under the strong conviction that duty called them to it. We pronounce no sentence upon such; our prayer for them is, that God may guide them into all truth. But to those who continue members of the Church of England, we say, Weigh this important subject with care; give it at least a patient, faithful, prayerful, comprehensive investigation, before you imitate an example, which, let the motives and general deportment of those who exhibit it be what they may, we must consider as calculated to lead you into error, and to injure, in the end, the cause of Christ. We entreat you as you value the truth of God, and desire to see it honoured, not to suffer your minds to be shaken by any bold assertions about the concessions of learned Pædobaptists, or any unfair insinuations about their motives for adhering to their church. We pray you not to be alarmed by the suggestion that you are shrinking from obedience, or fearing to “take up your cross,” because you refuse to be immersed by those who deny the validity of your baptism.\* A tender conscience may easily be wounded by such appeals, and its possessor induced to take a step, which, in truth, is no act of obedience to Christ, no tak-

\*See Mr. C.'s pamphlet, p. 169,—172.

ing up the cross which he has enjoined to be taken up, and when the really moving principle is not a just and enlightened perception of the true nature of the question at issue, but a vague apprehension, that it must be fear, or shame, or some worldly motive that withholds you from complying with an invitation that is couched in such solemn terms. Have you been solemnly dedicated to God at his baptismal font in your infancy? Then no man has God's authority for saying to you, "Arise and be baptized" again. There is "one Lord, one faith, *one baptism*." That baptism you have already received. God enjoins upon you *no other*. No subsequent bathing in water, whatever may be the piety, or intention of those who apply it, whatever may be the principles or the motives of those who receive it, has any title whatever to be denominated *Christian baptism*.

## CHAPTER XII.

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### ON THE VISIBLE CHURCH.

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THE pamphlet which has called forth the preceding remarks, and to the leading principles of which our attention has been directed, closes with an "Appeal to Christians to combine for the formation of a spiritual church." As the basis of this appeal, the Author assumes it as a thing conceded, that the Christian church is a purely spiritual society. He tells us that the "only sort of community which Christ recognises as a church, is a company of spiritual worshippers :"<sup>\*</sup> and again, "the only

<sup>\*</sup>Pamphlet, p. 196.

church which Jesus Christ recognizes, is that which consists of his sincere disciples."\* Estimating their claim by this standard, he has previously stated in regard to the Established Churches of England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Prussia, Geneva, &c. that it is a gross absurdity to call any of these churches; "they are not churches, but nations among whom there may or may not be, as it happens, a thin *sprinkling* of Christians."† The cause of their present degraded and fallen state he gravely asserts to be infant baptism.‡ "The only possible remedy," he says, "is for religious persons to separate from them, and to form distinct churches on the model of the Scriptures."§ This course, he maintains, is essential for the advancement of true religion, and fully justified by the commands of Scripture, the authority of Hooker, and the example of the Reformers.

In examining these assumptions, it will be necessary to inquire, with some degree of care, into the real nature of the Christian church. Strongly impressed with the importance of forming a correct estimate of this, we earnestly solicit those who feel an interest in the subject, and particularly any who have been influenced by the statements above referred to, to bring these statements to the test of a serious and faithful examination. We implore them, as they honour the truth, not to suffer themselves to be swayed by any representations, however plausible, or congenial to their particular frame of mind, which have not first been carefully weighed, and compared with the standard of truth. We ask only of such persons, and we do it, God is our witness, with a sincere desire to promote their highest interest, to open their Bibles, and accompany us through the pages of the New Testa-

\*Pamphlet p. 193.

†Ibid, Page 158.

‡Page 190.

§Page 193.

ment, and to judge with candour, whether a faithful description of the Visible Church of Christ, has been exhibited by the Author of the pamphlet under review.

In the parables of our blessed Lord, we have a prospective view of what the visible church was to be in future ages. And how is it there represented? Not surely as a community of purely spiritual worshippers. Take for example, the parable of the Sower.\* This parable evidently represents the different characters who are found in the professing Church of Christ,—the careless, the unstable, the worldly minded, and the sincere. Out of the four classes there represented to us, three are unsound professors. Take the parable of the net cast into the sea.† Here, observe, the scene is laid “in the kingdom of heaven,” or Gospel church. The net which gathers of every kind, assuredly represents the meeting of different characters within that church. But the two distinct classes of good and bad are supposed to continue together and are only severed by the angels at the end of the world. The parable of the ten virgins conveys the same truth.‡ Here undoubtedly all are professors of religion. All carry lamps, the emblem of profession; all go forth to welcome the bridegroom; all hope to be saved; but half of these professors have no vital religion in their hearts, and are finally rejected. The same view of the Gospel church is given in the parable of the talents,§ and of the marriage feast,|| but by means of different comparisons.¶ In short, wherever our Lord’s instruc-

\*Matt. xiii. 1—23. †Matt. xiii. 47—50 ‡Matt. xxv. 1—13.

§Matt. xxv. 14—30 ||Matt. xxii. 1—14.

¶“The Church of God may therefore contain both them which indeed are not his, yet must be reputed his by us that know not their inward thoughts, and them whose apparent wickedness testifieth, even in the sight of the whole world, that God abhorreth them. For to this and no other purpose are meant those parables

tions convey the slightest hint of what the state of his church in this world was to be, we find them decidedly opposed to the Utopian idea of a purely spiritual church.

And what the parables announced in the way of prophecy, facts soon corroborated. The Christian church was scarcely organized upon the model of the new dispensation, before the mixture of evil with the good began to be apparent. It is not to the first few days after the Spirit's descent at Pentecost, while impressions were vivid, and feelings strongly excited, that we are to look for a just picture of what the militant church was to be under the Christian economy; yet few of these days had elapsed before an Ananias and Sapphira, and subsequently a Simon Magus, walking in the steps of the mercenary Judas, disgraced their Christian profession. What the general aspect of the churches in Judea was, it is somewhat difficult to judge, inasmuch as the persecutions that raged against the followers of Christ in that country compelled them to wander as fugitives from city to city, and village to village, without having the opportunity of stated ordinances and worship. If, however, as learned authors have maintained, we are to suppose that the General Epistle of James was addressed to them, we should not be led to form a high estimate of their spiritual condition. From the second chapter of that Epistle, we should certainly be induced to infer, that, among the persons addressed as brethren, a profession of faith, unaccompanied by the reality, had become common, and from chapter iii. 1—14, that vain-glorious and angry passions, with bitter envyings and strife, were extremely prevalent. The early part of the fourth Chapter still

which our Saviour in the Gospel hath concerning mixture of vice with virtue, light with darkness, as well an openly known and seen, as a cunningly-cloaked mixture." Hooker, Book V. Sect. 68.

more plainly shews, that wars and fightings and worldliness prevailed among them to a very great extent, so as to hinder the efficacy of their prayers. And indeed the remainder of the Epistle clearly evinces, that while, they were addressed and acknowledged as brethren, there could have been very little of vital godliness, and of the genuine fruits of the Spirit apparent among them.

If from Judea we turn our attention to the churches of lesser Asia, a wide field of observation is presented. The history of one of these, that of Ephesus, is largely adverted to in the Sacred writings, and the different allusions to it extend through a period of nearly forty years. Surely if the Christian Church be a purely spiritual body of men, we might reasonably expect to find an exhibition of it among the favoured disciples of Ephesus, who appear, as a church, to have stood high in the estimation and affections of the Apostle Paul. What then was the real state of that church? Paul described it by anticipation, when he told them at his last affectionate interview with their Presbyters—"Of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them."\*

In his Epistles to Timothy written several years after, we find constant allusions to a variety of characters, who evidently formed part of the Visible Church, to whom the term *spiritual* could ill be applied; persons "living in pleasure"† "idle, tattlers, busy bodies, speaking things which they ought not,"‡ thus "turning aside after Satan."§ We find men broaching the most detestable heresies, even denying the resurrection of the dead.|| And we find the Apostle employing, not with an express reference to the 19th century, as some writers appear to think, but

\*Acts xx. 30. †1 Tim. v. 6. ‡1 Tim. v. 13.

§1 Tim. v. 15. ||2 Tim. ii. 17, 18.



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Tim. v. 13.  
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to the very age in which Timothy lived, the following strong description. "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."\* This mixed condition of the militant church St. Paul describes by an apt allusion: "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour."† And again, pointing to the same state of things, he remarks—"Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before unto judgment, and some men they follow after."‡ The general character of the Ephesian church many years afterwards was that "she had left her first love;"§ and the severest woes were denounced against her, unless she speedily repented. She was still however addressed and acknowledged as a *church*.|| The case of the other churches in Asia afford scope for the same remark.—Pergamos had within her pale the imitators of Balaam, and the holders of the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes,¶ yet Pergamos was still a church.\*\* Thyatira had her false prophetess, who seduced the servants of the Living God,†† yet Thyatira was a *church*. Sardis had only "a few names which had not defiled their garments."‡‡ Laodicea was lukewarm, and self-righteous.§§ Yet Thyatira and Laodicea were still acknowledged among the Christian churches of Asia.—How can this chain of evidence be resisted,

\*2 Tim. iii. 2—5. †2 Tim. ii. 20. ‡1 Tim. v. 24. §Rev. ii. 4.  
||Rev. iii. 1. ¶Rev. ii. 14, 15. \*\*Rev. ii. 12. ††Rev. ii. 20.  
‡‡Rev. iii. 4. §§Rev. iii. 16, 17.

in its clear and decisive bearing upon the nature of the Visible Church?

Among the numerous churches of Greece we should be equally at a loss to discover an example of a purely spiritual church. In fact, the more fully the history of any particular church is placed before our view, the more striking are the evidences afforded that the Visible Church then was essentially what the Visible Church is now, a mixture of good and evil, a combination of sound and unsound professors. The church at Corinth, to which reference has already been made, affords full proof of this position. Among the members of that church a variety of evils existed. In chapter i. 11, of his first Epistle, St. Paul says, "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my Brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you." In chapter iii. 1—4, he again alludes to this fact as a proof of their being in a carnal rather than a spiritual frame of mind; "Ye are yet carnal," he says, "for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" In chapter v. 1, he refers to the existence of gross immorality among them, such as even heathens were ashamed to tolerate. In chapter vi. 6, he represents them as contending for their rights, without regard to the honour of Christ. "Brother" he says, "goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers." In chapter xi. 21, 22, he discloses the awful fact that they profaned even the Lord's Supper by gluttony and drunkenness; and in chapter xv. 34, he declares to these professed followers of Christ, that some among them had not the knowledge of the truth. "Awake" he says, "to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of

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God : I speak this to your shame." Is it possible to contemplate these striking passages, and not perceive the extreme absurdity of representing the church of Christ, even as it existed under the Apostles, as a purely spiritual church ? Equally vain is the attempt to find, among the other churches of Greece, a single example of such a church. The church of Galatia had, at a very early period, in a great measure departed from one of the fundamentals of Christianity.\* The Philippians, upon the whole one of the purest churches, had among them "those who preached Christ of envy, and strife,"† others who were enemies to the cross of Christ "whose minds were set upon earthly things," and whose "end was destruction."‡ The Colossians had those among them who were "vainly puffed up with their fleshly minds."§ The Thessalonians "some which walked disorderly, working not at all, but were busybodies."|| In short, it is impossible to point out one among the particular churches to whom Epistles were addressed, which is not evidently proved, by the testimony of inspiration, to be composed of good and evil characters, spiritual and carnal men, those who had the power, and those who rested in the form, of godliness.

The Roman church, as well as others, contained its unsound members ; it had its deceitful professors, who "served not our Lord Jesus Christ; but caused divisions and offences contrary to his doctrine."¶

And when the Apostles addressed the Christians who were scattered abroad through the different provinces of the Roman Empire, they address them under the full persuasion that, wherever situated, such would be their actual condition. St. Peter intimates, that, among the per-

\*Gal. iii. 1-3. †Phil. i. 15. ‡Phil. iii. 18, 19. §Col. ii. 18.  
 ||2 Thess. iii. 11. ¶Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

sons he was addressing, there were those who lacked the Christian virtues, who "could not see afar off and had forgotten that they were purged from their old sins."\* They had "their false teachers, who brought in damnable heresies," and "many followers of their pernicious ways," bringing disgrace upon the Christian cause.† They had professors of Christ's holy religion who "walked after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despised government; presumptuous, self-willed persons," who "counted it pleasure to riot in the day time;" who were "spots and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feasted with them;"‡ St. Jude in his general Epistle describes the same characters. He terms them "ungodly men, who turned the grace of our God into lasciviousness"§ "These," he says, "are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."|| Is it possible, we ask, for a reasonable man to contemplate candidly these passages, and not perceive that the Visible Church has never at any period been free from the mixture of evil characters; that it has never been what our opponent terms a truly spiritual and pure communion; and that the Apostles never attempted to render it so by the means which are now recommended?

Upon these grounds, we reject, as utterly unscriptural, the idea that "a company of spiritual worshippers is the only sort of community which Christ recognises as a

\*2 Pet. i. 9. †2 Pet. ii. 1—3. ‡2 Pet. ii. 10—22.

§Jude 4. ||Ibid. 12, 13.

church," and the mitigated sentiment that that community cannot be a church, the majority of whose members are wicked.\* We feel that the sweeping denunciation of our Author, by which every national church in Christendom is divested of the very name of church, wants that support from the word of God, which alone can authorize it to be uttered or received. We plainly perceive that the supreme Head of the church, who walks in the midst of the churches, and holds in his right hand the stars and the candlesticks, has not removed from them either the name or the privileges of churches, but has in some instances shed down at this very crisis his heavenly blessing, in a more than ordinary degree, both upon Ministers and people, and called them forth to bear a noble testimony to the truth against superstition on the one hand and infidelity on the other.

We reject, for the same reasons, our Author's assertion that the corruptions which prevail in those churches are to be traced to infant baptism as their origin. If they are so, we are convinced it will go far to show that infant baptism must have been an Apostolic practice, inasmuch as these very evils have been shewn to have existed in the church, under their immediate inspection.

And we further reject, as being not only without support from Scripture, but directly opposed to its statements, the idea, that the only remedy for these evils, is *separation* from the several communions where they are found. Where do we find St. Paul, St. Peter, St. James, St. John, or St. Jude standing forth in the midst of the corrupt and lukewarm churches of their day, and commanding the truly pious among them to come out and form distinct churches? The church of Corinth, remember, was extremely corrupt; the morals of its members

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet p. 189.

appear to have been far worse than those which characterize the Protestant communions alluded to above; yet Paul does not say to them, You are no longer a church; let the pious separate forthwith from your communion. The church of Sardis appears to have been corrupt as to the greater part of her members; there were only a few names that had not defiled their garments; yet St. John does not say to that few, come out and form a distinct communion; but he addresses, as a church, the collective body of good and evil, and calls upon them to repent that they might escape the divine judgments.

To countenance the idea that separation, under the circumstances adverted to, is the duty of pious Christians, our Author has appealed to several texts of Scripture, which it is therefore necessary to bring under distinct consideration. The first passage is 2 Corinthians vi. 17—"Come out from among them, and be ye separate." Separate from whom, does the Apostle mean? The context places it beyond a doubt, that he means the *Heathen*, persons living in gross idolatry. And separate in *what respects*? Some understand him to refer to *marriage*, others to a participation in their *religious rites*, their *feastings*, and *sacrifices* in their temples. Suppose him to include *both*, can the letter or the spirit of the passage apply to the case of church communion, where the *professed object* of the worshippers is *to obey and honour Christ*? Certainly *not*. Mere profession, we grant, cannot *save the soul*; but the outward profession of Christianity so alters the relative circumstances in which those who make it stand to us, that this prohibition cannot apply to our holding communion with them in external ordinances. He who joins idolators in their religious worship thereby makes an open declaration that *he honours an idol as his God*. He who joins professed

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Christians, whether consistent or inconsistent professors, at the Sacrament of the Lord's table, declares thereby that *he honours Christ as his God and Saviour*. Are these two declarations alike? Can God's prohibition of the former be applied to the latter by any just rules of interpretation?

Hooker is quoted as sanctioning the principles of separation. The words of this venerable writer are these: "There are two kinds of wicked men of whom, in the fifth of the first of the Corinthians, the blessed Apostle speaks thus: 'Do you not judge them that are within? but God judgeth them that are without.' There are wicked therefore whom the church may judge, and there are wicked whom God only judgeth; wicked within, and wicked without the walls of the church. If, within the church, particular persons be such, as cannot otherwise be reformed, the rule of the Apostolical judgment is this: Separate them from among you; if whole assemblies, this, Separate yourselves from among them; for what society hath light with darkness?"\* The case of the church of Rome was in the immediate view of the writer. The kind of community pointed to was such as that church presented prior to the reformation; where corruptions, not merely in practice, but in the essential doctrines of Christianity, had received the sanction of her decrees and councils; they had become, not merely the characteristics of particular individuals within her pale, but part and parcel of the church herself, permanently, universally, irrevocably. Reformation within her pale was impossible; there was no court of appeal, no rallying point, no power of resuscitation within her. How different the circumstances of such a church as the Established Church of England! a church, which, in her articles, creeds, and lit-

\*Discourse on justification.

urgy, most fully recognises the essential doctrines of the Gospel, and not only permits, but requires, the full assent to them, and the open avowal of them, from every clergyman within her pale! Let the author of the pamphlet under review look candidly at the actual state of that church in England and Ireland at this moment; and he will find ample proof in many a diocese, that reformation is not only not impossible, but that vital and spiritual religion pervades her communion, influencing the hearts of her prelates, presbyters, deacons, and laity to a very great extent. In fact, while her doctrines and rules of discipline continue what they are, reformation in any part of that church can never be impossible. It only requires that faithful men should determine to execute her laws, to bring them into effective operation.

The second passage is 1 Cor. v. 11. "If any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or a drunkard, &c., with such a one *no not to eat.*" This prohibition applies either to private intercourse or church communion. If to the former, as there is reason to conclude,\* it cannot be a rule for the guidance of Christians in reference to separation from churches. If to the latter, it is then equivalent to what the Apostle says, v. 13. "Therefore put away from among you that wicked person," and is a rule for the church in its collective capacity, and not for particular individuals. It is a direction to the officers of the church, in whom the power of government is vested, not for private Christians.

\*The verb rendered "to eat with," is *συνεσθίειν*. There is no example in the New Testament of its being used in reference to the Sacrament. On the only two other occasions where it occurs it refers to an ordinary meal; and here, it is explained by the verb *συναντιμνησθαι* in the former part of the verse, which refers to familiarity in our ordinary intercourse. Schleusner says "*ἡδὲ συνεσθίειν*, h. e. *μη συναντιμνησθαι*, ut ibidem exprimitur."



The third passage is 2 Tim. iii. 1—5. Vicious and worldly characters are here described, and then a precept is given to Timothy to “turn away from such.” Surely no man acquainted with Scripture can imagine that this was a direction to Timothy to forsake the Ephesian church of which he was Bishop, if he found such characters in it. If the precept contained a direction to Timothy in his *official* character at all, it would not be a direction to leave his church, but to *exclude these vicious characters from its privileges*. It appears, however, to have had really no reference to the question of church communion. It was a precept to govern the conduct of Timothy in the ordinary intercourse of life, a salutary caution to him to *avoid familiarity* with profane and vicious characters.\*

Matt. xviii. 15—18 is appealed to as sanctioning the principle of separation. The case here pointed to, however, is one totally distinct from that of a wicked person, frequenting the Lord's table. It refers to private wrongs, when one Christian brother is personally injured by the unjust or oppressive conduct of the other, and we are not warranted to take it as a direction in other dissimilar cases. But suppose the cases were similar, which they certainly *are not*, what is the course pointed out as proper to be adopted? Is it *separation from our church*? Precisely the *reverse*. It requires us to go privately to our brother in a Christian spirit, and endeavour to obtain redress by kind expostulation. If this expedient should fail, we are to repeat the effort in the presence of witnesses, as required by the Divine law in Deut. xix. 15. If this likewise prove unsuccessful, our next resort is *to the church*; we are to solicit its friendly interference in our behalf. Should this

\*“Cum istis familiarem consuetudinem inire noli,” Schleusner in loco.

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also be without avail, the final step must be to have no farther communication with such a character, to regard him, as the Jews regarded the heathen, as a person to be shunned and avoided. Is this, we ask, a direction to leave our church, because an offending brother is permitted to be a member of its communion? Unquestionably not. It defines our duty in regard to the offending individual, and not to the church or communion of which he is a member. And before we are authorised to pursue this course in regard to *him*, the *preliminary steps must be taken*. Do separatists from the communion of the church take these preliminary steps? Have they gone first in private to the offending party? Have they afterwards appealed to him in the presence of witnesses? Have they then requested the interference of the church? When this was done, and not till then, it is time enough to adopt the extreme measures suggested by the concluding counsel of the Saviour; and *not then* to sever from the communion of their church, which does not appear to be at all contemplated by that counsel. If the feelings of pious communicants are wounded by seeing ungodly and immoral persons approaching the Sacramental table, let them candidly state the fact to those in whom the power of church discipline is vested. Having committed the matter to them, another duty remains; let them make it a subject of prayer, that their offending brother may be brought to a sense of his guilt, and then restored in the spirit of meekness to the communion of his church. Prayer and firmness on the part of pious communicants will do more to reform the church, than ever will be effected by separation.

We are next informed, that pure doctrine is as essential as strict discipline; and "continued attendance on public teaching, where any of the essential truths of

Christianity are either neglected or not insisted upon with earnestness, is an error which cannot be justified.\* The proofs advanced are our Lord's admonition to his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, who taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and more especially his description of his genuine followers in John x. "My sheep hear my voice, but the voice of strangers WILL THEY NOT HEAR." Our opponent's quotation here is inaccurate. The clause, upon which he lays the stress of his argument, is not contained in Scripture. The Saviour's words are, "a stranger WILL THEY NOT FOLLOW," which renders his meaning more obvious than the former expression would do, and shews that it is not the *hearing with the outward ear* to which he refers, but the *receiving, adopting, and obeying* the instructions of those who rejected his Gospel. The persons to whom our Lord referred were the Scribes or Doctors of the Law, the persons upon whom the people depended for religious instruction in their synagogues, and who generally belonged to the sect of the Pharisees. These persons had not only curtailed, obscured, and altered the doctrines of God, substituting in many instances for them the foolish imaginations of man; but had positively rejected the claims of Christ, and declared that any who confessed him should be ejected from their synagogues. Can we, without darkening counsel, pretend to institute a comparison between the instructions of such teachers, and the preaching of those who, even if they neglect to insist with earnestness upon some essential truths, must necessarily from the very constitutions of their church, acknowledge Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of the world, and his Gospel as the rule of faith and practice for all his followers? But let us come to the

\*Mr. C's Pamphlet, p. 191.

point. Did Christ prohibit his followers from attending the synagogue worship where these Scribes and Pharisees expounded the Law? So far from it, he countenanced their attendance there, directed them to respect the authority of these expounders of the Law; and while exercising a prudent discrimination, to obey with implicit submission, whatever these Scribes delivered in conformity with the Divine Law. "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."\* Can there be a more complete refutation of the position which our opponent has assumed above, than is supplied by this unquestionable fact, that Jesus did actually countenance the attendance of his followers upon the public teaching of the ordinary instructors of their nation, although in many vitally important points these instructors were ignorant of the truth? We apologize not for false or defective doctrine. We do not deem it a matter of small importance whether or not the pure Gospel of Jesus is proclaimed in all its fulness, freeness, and abounding grace. Let salvation by faith be declared in the ears of sinners. Let Christ crucified and glorified be held up to their view as the only way of salvation. Let them be taught what it is to be "*born of the Spirit*," as well as to be "*born of water*." Let the holy, elevated, spiritual demands of the Gospel be urged as the only standard of the Christian's walk. But, to gain these ends, let us not rend the Visible Church of God into endless divisions, and attempt to justify the proceeding by an appeal to Scriptures which are wholly irrelevant to the subject. If separation from a church which is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ

\*Mat. xxii. 2, 2.

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himself being the chief corner stone, is in every case to follow, where the doctrine of a particular minister is deemed unsound or defective, schisms must be countless, divisions endless, and even the semblance of unity not to be expected on earth. How much more consistent would it be for the humble-minded Christian, instead of rending needlessly the bond of Christian fellowship, to wait with patience upon God; to pray for holy and enlightened pastors to be sent him; to compare with diligence what he hears with the standard of divine truth, "proving all things, holding fast that which is good," and bearing in mind the hint of pious Herbert—

"The worst speak something good; if all want sense,

"God takes a text, and preacheth patience.

"He that gets patience, and the blessing which

"Preachers conclude with, hath not lost his pains."

The parallel assumed by our Author, between the case of the Reformers and those who are called upon to separate from Protestant communions, has, in reality, no existence. The circumstances of the two classes of persons are totally different. Instead of being the completion of a good work which the Reformation in the sixteenth century only commenced, such a separation, we must be permitted to say, would be the beginning of a totally different work, which neither the principles of the Reformers nor of any others who rightly understand their Bible, can possibly sanction. The Reformers, in a case of urgent necessity, where conformity without sacrifice of principle was out of the question, where gross idolatry had superseded the worship of the Living God, and doctrines which struck at the very foundation of the Christian faith were maintained, undertook to reform the abuses of the church of which they were members, and return in every essential matter to the purity of primitive religion. This brought upon them the sentence of excommunication from

Papal Rome, a sentence of which they did not acknowledge the authority, inasmuch as the usurped supremacy of that church over other national churches had not a shadow of support from the Word of God. Such a sentence could in no way affect their national and ecclesiastical rights. They proceeded therefore in their undertaking. The work of *Reformation* was theirs; the work of *separation* was that of *Papal Rome*.\* Had the Reformers been permitted to withhold their assent and countenance from the tenets of that church, in regard to Purgatory, Images, Saints, the Virgin Mary, the sacrifice of the Mass, and the impious system of indulgences; had they been permitted to have teachers who acknowledged Christ as their Supreme Head, and the Bible as their rule of faith, neither Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, or any other judicious man among them would have felt it lawful to separate from

\*The following extract from the "Bulla in Cœnâ Domini," affords an illustration of the point. This celebrated document is read every year on the day of the Lord's Supper, or Maunday Thursday, in the presence of the Pope. Thus it runs—

1. We excommunicate and anathematize in the name of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and by the authority of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own, all Hussites, Wickliffites, Lutherans, Zuinglians, Calvinists, Hugonots, Anabaptists, Trinitarians, and Apostates from the Christian Faith, and all other Heretics, by whatsoever name they are called, and of whatsoever sect they be, as also their adherents and receivers, favourers, and generally any defenders of them, and all who without our authority, or that of the Apostolic See, knowingly read, print, or any ways for any cause whatsoever, publicly or privately, on any pretext or colour, defend their books containing Heresy or treating of Religion; as also schismatics, and those who withdraw themselves or recede obstinately from the obedience of us, the Bishop of Rome for the time being." See, in further illustration of this point, the Bull of Pope Pius the fifth, deposing Queen Elizabeth; absolving her subjects from the Oaths of Allegiance, and anathematizing such as continued in their obedience, as quoted by Burnet,—Hist. Reform. V. iv. p. 398.]

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the communion of the general church. They would have deemed separation in that case a sin, and not a duty, and every act that led to it, as partaking of that character.\* Let not their example then be pleaded at the present day, to sanction the conduct of those who separate from the Church of England; the principles of the Reformers when rightly understood would afford no countenance to such a measure, but on the contrary condemn it in the strongest terms. For that church exacts from her members no sinful terms of communion. She maintains the pure doctrines of Christ. She administers the pure sacraments of Christ. She acknowledges as her rule of faith the Bible alone, and enjoins it upon her members, whether lay or clerical, to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all their walk and conversation. What can authorize us to think it a duty to separate from such a church? The idea that her discipline is not sufficiently strict, whether it be well or ill founded, cannot justify such a proceeding.† The standard, by which that discipline is tried in the present instance, is unquestionably a false one; it is such a standard as, if acted upon, would have authorized separations without limit, divisions without end, in every church that was established and governed by the Apostles themselves. But where do you find St. Paul making light of the sin of

\*A single extract will render the matter sufficiently plain. The following are Calvin's words, "If they would give us such a hierarchy, in which the Bishops have such a pre-eminence, as that they do not refuse to be subject to Christ, and to depend upon him, as their only head, and refer all to him; then I will confess, that *they* are worthy of all anathemas, if any such shall be found, who will not reverence it, and submit themselves to it with the utmost obedience.

†Burnet justly remarks, "All order and government are destroyed, if private persons take upon them to judge and censure others; or to separate from any body, because there are abuses in the use of this authority." Article xxxiii.

schism, treating the subject of divisions as a Christian duty, or summoning the spiritually minded to separate from their respective churches and form themselves into a pure communion?

It must be difficult, we think, to read the New Testament with attention, and not be struck with the earnestness with which union is inculcated, and divisions are condemned. Do we wish to understand the nature of the union which is there enjoined? Behold it exemplified in the early disciples, who "continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."\* Would we know St. Paul's mind in regard to its importance? Hear him express it to the Ephesians. "I beseech you, brethren, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace;" and mark the reason of his appeal, for "there is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called with one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."† Would we know how St. Paul regarded the violation of this union? Hear him expostulate with the Corinthians, "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus, that ye all speak the same thing, and there be *no divisions among you*. Every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say that I baptized in mine own name."‡ In another part of the same Epistle he warns them that while they are actuated by this party spirit, they could

\*Acts ii. 42.

†Ephes. iv. 1—6.

‡1 Cor. i. 10—15.



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only be addressed as carnal, not as spiritual, men ;\* and, to impress more forcibly upon their mind the nature and importance of Christian union, he institutes a comparison between the members of the natural body, and the members of the mystical body of Christ, into which, by one Spirit, they had all been baptized.† How different, we are compelled to say, is the spirit which breathes these heavenly counsels from that which pervades the pamphlet under review !

But our opponent denies that the separation of the pious from their respective communions for the objects he specifies, is schism. "Schism," he tells us, "is a division among *real* Christians on needless grounds."‡ Will this definition apply to the schism that existed in the Corinthian church ? Were the members of that church all *real* Christians, vitally pious, spiritually minded persons ? Assuredly not. We conclude therefore that a division among persons professing the essential doctrines of the Christian faith, though they are a mixed body, composed partly of truly pious, and partly of those who have the form without the power of godliness, is schism. But the Protestant communions, from which the pious are invited to separate, are precisely in this situation. They are mixed bodies, composed partly of pious and partly of worldly and carnal men. The very invitation to the pious to separate from them supposes this to be the case. They are not, as our opponent styles them, "*irreligious* societies." They are societies associated for religious ends, and containing within them a portion of truly religious persons, and are therefore, when spoken of in their collective capacity, entitled to be called religious societies, just as the different churches planted by the Apostles were spoken of collectively as "holy," "sanctified," "elect,"

\*1 Cor. iii. 1—4. †1 Cor. xii. 13—25. ‡Pamphlet, p. 196.

though many of their members were carnal and worldly, and some even flagrantly immoral. It follows, then, that divisions among such societies as the Protestant communions referred to, do constitute that very schism which the Scripture denounces as sin.

Some writers, however, make a distinction between separation and schism. They contend that the latter means properly an alienation of feeling among persons who continue members of the same religious community, and that separation is a totally different thing. Dr. Campbell says—"It is not so much what makes an outward distinction or separation, (*though this also may in a lower degree be so denominated,*) as what produces an alienation of the heart, which constitutes schism in the sense of the Apostle."\* The Doctor's reasoning to prove this view of the case is not by any means convincing. The term schism, as all confess, literally means "a rent, breach, or separation." In the case of the Corinthians it certainly included two prominent features of what we commonly term separation, viz. the ranging themselves under different leaders, and partaking of the communion apart from each other; and perhaps a *third*, viz. the cherishing of different sentiments or opinions. Is it not then going too far to say, that the schism of which they were guilty was only an *alienation of feeling*? Schism, we have no hesitation in saying, is a violation of Christian union. But Christian union includes union of *affection*,† union of *doctrine*,‡ and union of *ordinances*;§ a violation therefore of any of these is schism, and, where it extends to the last, it commonly includes all the rest, and, instead of being schism in a lower degree, ought to be regarded as the very highest degree that can exist. The description of the disciples in Acts ii. plainly shews, that Christian

\*Dissertation, ix. †John xvii. 22. ‡1 Cor. i. 10.

§Acts ii. 42. Ephes. iv. 5.

fellowship includes not merely union in feeling and doctrine, but union likewise in external ordinances; and the vast importance of the latter must be felt, if we reflect how much it tends to promote the growth of brotherly affection among the followers of Christ, and to manifest to others the excellence of true religion. No fellowship, that falls short of this, will ever present to the eye of the world that striking exhibition of union, which will carry conviction to the hearts of unbelievers and convince them God is with us of a truth.\* As long as Christendom is divided into innumerable sects and parties, ranged under different leaders, so long will the ungodly triumph; and the man, who needlessly gives occasion for that triumph, is responsible for all the evils that result from it.† “It must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!”

\*John xvii. 21.

†The celebrated John Wesley has devoted a Sermon to the consideration of the subject of Schism. He considers the term to be strictly applicable to *division within a church*, but that it may in a remote sense be applied to the case of separation. He forcibly enumerates the evils of separation, shewing that it is evil in itself, and productive of the most mischievous consequences—evil tempers—evil words—evil actions. “These consequences,” he adds, “are not imaginary, are not built on mere conjectures, but on plain matter of fact. This has been the case again and again within these last thirty or forty years: these have been the fruits which we have seen over and over to be consequent on such a separation. Perhaps such persons will say, ‘We did not do this willfully; we were constrained to separate from that society, because we could not continue therein with a clear conscience: we could not continue without sin. I was not allowed to continue therein, without breaking a commandment of God.’ If this was the case, you could not be blamed for separating from that Society. Suppose, for instance, you were a member of the Church of Rome, and you could not remain therein without committing idolatry, without worshipping of idols, whether images, or saints and angels; then it would be your bounden duty to leave that community, totally to separate from it. Suppose you could not

Let serious members of the Church of England weigh these points with care. With affectionate concern for their welfare and usefulness, we say to them, *Adhere with firmness to your Church.* It is the fashion of these days to exclaim against your Church, and it is deeply to be regretted, that among those who are endeavouring to promote her downfall, there are many conscientious, though mistaken, persons to be found. But the Church of England, whatever abuses may have been cherished by the supineness of some of her adherents, has the strongest claims upon the affection and veneration, not only of her own members, but of every class of persons who believe the Bible, and who love the truths which it declares. The Church of England maintains in her Creeds, Articles and Liturgy, the vital doctrines of Christianity, and defines them with fulness, clearness, and precision. The Church of England has been, in the hands of

remain in the Church of England without doing something which the word of God forbids, or omitting something which the word of God positively commands: if this were the case (but, blessed be God, it is not,) you ought to separate from the Church of England.—But setting aside this case, suppose the church or society, to which I am now united, does not require me to do any thing which the scripture forbids, or to omit any thing which the scripture enjoins, it is then my indispensable duty to continue therein. And if I separate from it without any such necessity, I am justly chargeable (whether I foresaw them or no) with all the evils consequent upon that separation.—I have spoken the more explicitly upon this head, because it is so little understood; because so many of those who profess much religion, nay, and really enjoy a measure of it, have not the least conception of this matter, neither imagine such a separation to be any sin at all. They leave a Christian Society with as much unconcern as they go out of one room into another. They give occasion to all this complicated mischief, and wipe their mouth, and say they have done no evil; whereas they are justly chargeable before God and man, both with an action that is evil in itself, and with all the evil consequences which may be expected to follow, to themselves, to their brethren, and to the world."

God, an impregnable bulwark against infidelity and superstition. The Church of England has given birth to the brightest ornaments, and ablest advocates of the truth, that have ever lived within the pale of Christianity, since the days of the Apostles. The Church of England has been one of the most honoured instruments in diffusing throughout the world the light of pure religion. She has been the source of spiritual blessings to an incalculable number of souls, and stands, at this moment, amidst the churches of Christendom, unequalled in the purity of her doctrines, the soundness of her polity, and the actual amount of true and vital piety, which pervades the hearts of her members.

From such a church, which has taught you the elements of truth, and provided for your advancement in the genuine principles of religion, do not separate upon light and trivial grounds. The idea of forming a purely spiritual church is attractive, but chimerical. The project is impracticable. For a little season the scheme will appear to succeed; novelty will give it a momentary impulse; and the limited character of the society which unites for this object, will render it more easy to advance, and to wear the aspect of success; but when the society enlarges, when the charm of novelty is gone, when differences of opinion begin to discover themselves among its members; then it will be found that separation is not the road to spirituality; that schism is not the parent of union and peace; that dissent, with all its golden promises, neither tends to advance the glory of God, nor the interests of vital religion. For a confirmation of these remarks, we could refer you to a little work entitled "Christian fellowship, or the Church-member's Guide," by J. A. James of Birmingham. Mr. James is a congregational dissenter of no small eminence, and has written with a view to guard the members of his communion against the peculiar dangers which attend

their form of church government; and this little work has been re-published in America,\* for the use of the Baptist churches, as the best guide and directory which could be presented to them. Read the concluding chapter of this work, where Mr. James describes the various causes of the schisms, divisions, and fierce contentions that agitate their communion;† read it with candour and attention,

\*By J. O. Choules, A. M. Pastor of the second Baptist Church in Newport, R. I.

†Many of our readers may not have Mr James's work at hand; we therefore give a few extracts.—Speaking of the causes of the schisms which sometimes distract and disturb their churches, he says “The existence of this evil truth will not allow us to *deny*, nor ingenuity enable us to *conceal*. Divisions in our churches produce incalculable mischief, since they not only prevent the *growth* of religion in the distracted societies, but they impair and destroy it; they excite a prejudice, a fearful and destructive prejudice, against the principles of independent churches, and extend their mischief still farther, by obscuring the glory of religion itself.—But what are the causes of these schisms? 1. Some of these lie with Ministers. 1st. A *defective education* not unfrequently prepares a minister to be the cause of much uneasiness in a Christian Church.—2. In some cases, the evil is to be traced to the want of ministerial *diligence*. Instead of devoting their time and their energies to the pursuits of the study, they spend one half of their weeks in running about the country to attend public meetings, and the other in gossiping either at their own house, or the houses of their friends. I believe one half of our church quarrels originate in lazy loitering ministers.—3. Others are *imprudent*.—4. Others are men of *bad temper*.—5. Others are *immoral*. They commit sin, and yet, attaching to themselves a party, they introduce great disorder and confusion into the society.—II. Other causes of division are to be found amongst the people. 1st. A very large proportion of our schisms arise at the time of *choosing a minister*.—2. A *hasty choice of an unsuitable person* to fill the pastoral office, has frequently ended in great uneasiness. Upon our system of church government, it is not easy to displace an unsuitable individual, and therefore great caution should be observed in choosing him.—3. A peculiar and dishonourable *fickleness* of disposition on the part of the church is, in some instances, the cause of division. They seldom approve a minister beyond a period of seven years, and

and we think you will say at the conclusion of it, The good old paths are best; the church in which the Providence of God has placed me, has, after all, the best claim to my affection and esteem; she has her imperfections, but other systems have them more extensively; like the Ark, she has inconveniences and restrictions within her walls, but all is a sea of troubles beyond them. There may be those who prefer restlessness to limitation, to go to and fro over the troubled waves until the waters subside; but my choice is different; to find rest for the sole of my foot, I must tarry within, until the season of conflict is past, and permission is given to me to go forth and take my station upon the summit of the everlasting hills.

Such, we conceive, is the course which prudence dictates. Why should a different one be adopted? We appeal to the members of the Church of England. Why, upon becoming deeply concerned for your souls, should you think it necessary to forsake your church? Has she taken from you the Scriptures of God? Has she forbidden you to pray? Has she prohibited you from trusting in Jesus, or dedicating your life to his glory? Your heart tells you she has not. Perhaps it tells you more, that it was within her venerable walls your soul was first touched with a

are so uniform in the term of their satisfaction, as to make their neighbours look out for a change, when that term is about to expire.—4. Uneasiness has often arisen between a minister and his people, by the unwillingness of the latter to raise the *necessary support for their pastor*.—5. *The domineering spirit and conduct of some leading members* has often been the source of very considerable uneasiness to our churches.—6. *The relaxation of scriptural discipline* may be mentioned as another source of evil.—7. *The existence and prevalence of an Antinomian spirit* is a fruitful source of schism in our churches.—8. After all that has been said upon *distinct* and *specific* causes of disturbance, it must be admitted that the grand source of ecclesiastical distraction is the *very feeble operation of Christian principles on the hearts of Church Members*."



sense of divine things, and your mind first irradiated with heavenly light. There, possibly, your first serious impressions were received; there your first prayer of faith was offered; there you first learned to value a Saviour; there you found joy and peace in believing. And is separation from your church the duty you owe her, for having been, in the hands of a Gracious God, the ministering instrument of these unspeakable blessings? No,—rather pray for her peace and prosperity—rather seek to strengthen her cause—rather study her doctrines more closely—examine her principles more attentively—search more thoroughly the grounds which ought to attach you to her communion—above all, strive to imbibe the spirit of holiness which pervades her offices and formularies, and to exhibit the excellence of her tenets by a decided but humble and spiritual walk with God. For these things there is no prohibition in your *church*. If holiness be your aim, you need not seek it in separation. If vital religion be your heart's desire, you need not forsake your church to enjoy it. You may read your Bibles, love your Saviour, pray to your Heavenly Father, hear the Gospel preached, approach the ordinances of Christ, enjoy Christian fellowship, advance in spiritual religion, and prepare for the Church in glory within the pale of her communion, as well as in any other society of Christians which the compass of the world contains. May the Author of heavenly wisdom convince you of this! May He preserve you from a step which would be inconsistent with your best and highest interests. May He grant you to see the evils of those divisions which rend asunder the body of Christ! May He enable you, while living by faith in the Son of God, and witnessing a good confession before the world, to “preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!”



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